AGRI-NEWS

January 4, 1988

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Following is a two-part year end feature interview with Alberta Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga.

The first story looks at some of the Alberta government programs that have been created to help farmers cope with the tough economics that confront many sectors of the agriculture industry.

The second part of the feature details the Minister's views on two key issues, the Western Grain Stabilization Act and Free Trade.

The stories are written to be used as a series or to stand alone.

January 4, 1988
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Elzinga says government has responded to farm crisis

PETER ELZINGA

Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga says although there is no quick fix for the problems facing many Western Canadian farmers, the provincial government has committed millions of dollars, on three main fronts, to help stabilize Alberta's agriculture industry.

The Minister says producers realize the factors causing the industry the most grief are beyond the jurisdiction of the provincial legislature, but that hasn't meant the Alberta government has been sitting on its hands waiting for things to change.

While one province can't reverse the trend, he says the government has created and maintained programs to take the sting out of the national and international punches planted on the industry's jaw.

Speaking in a year-end interview the minister said the government strategy has focused on reducing production costs, maintaining farm incomes and expanding export markets.

The Minister stated, "World surpluses and the trading practices of other countries have severely reduced prices for many agricultural commodities. This has been particularly true in the area of crops, where the subsidy war being waged between the United States and the European Economic Community has had a devastating effect on our own producers.

"While the livestock industry has seen a return to good markets, the picture has been gloomy for grain and oilseed farmers. They have produced more than they ever have before, but prices for our crops have reached record lows, and our producers are now receiving less in real dollars than they have since the days of the Great Depression."

(Cont'd)

Elzinga says government has responded to farm crisis (cont'd)

"On the positive side, most market analysts think we have at last reached the bottom of the price slide, and can only go up from here. In fact, with the poor harvests seen this year in many other grain producing countries, some experts are predicting that prices may begin to move up fairly soon.

"In the area of marketing, the news is very positive. Prices may be terrible, but we're expecting that export volumes should be at record levels again this year."

Mr. Elzinga said in response to the difficult conditions facing industry the government is pursuing three main goals: reducing farm input costs; maintaining farm income by providing a "safety net" of stabilization and insurance programs; and building a more competitive and diversified agriculture industry through research, marketing, food processing and resource conservation programs.

PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTED

To reduce input costs, he says the Alberta government has implemented programs such as the Farm Fuel Distribution Allowance, the Farm Fertilizer Price Protection Program and the Farm Credit Stability Program.

"The Province's long-standing Farm Fuel Distribution Allowance, implemented in 1974, has significantly reduced the cost of one of the producer's most expensive farm inputs. Beginning in 1985, the Province reduced the price farmers paid for marked fuel used in farming operations by 14 cents per litre. Even now, during times of fiscal restraint and cutbacks, the program continues. About $130 million in assistance has been committed to the program in 1987-88 fiscal year."

With the cost of fertilizer representing as much as 30 per cent of farm input costs, the Minister says the government's Farm Fertilizer Price Protection Plan has also been a major benefit to producers, providing about $60 million in assistance.

(Cont'd)

Elzinga says government has responded to farm crisis (cont'd)

The Minister stated, "Through the $2 billion Farm Credit Stability Program announced in the summer of 1985, the province has helped more than 14,000 farm families to refinance their debt load at a fixed. lower rate of interest and to obtain new, less expensive credit.

"Based on current interest rates, the nearly $1.4 billion loaned so far under the Farm Credit Stability Program has resulted in an annual savings to Alberta farm families of more than $40 million.

AADC RECOMMENDATIONS

"As I'm sure producers are aware, the government took a further step in 1986 toward reducing the financial difficulties facing the agricultural community, when we undertook a major review of the Agricultural Development Corporation, and of the agricultural economy as a whole."

The review committee submitted their report to the Associate Minister, Shirley Cripps, last June, and included in it several recommendations on the adjustment of farm finance system.

"I am confident that these recommendations will represent a major step toward improving the financial situation in Alberta's agriculture industry," said the Minister.

In the area of stabilization and insurance, he says the government has provided farmers with a "safety net" of programs, including reviewing and revising the crop insurance program, and playing a lead role in the development of a series of national tripartite stabilization plans for several commodities."

The government's major review of the Canada-Alberta Crop Insurance Program was conducted by a panel chaired by former Agriculture Minister Dallas Schmidt. Following their review, the panel produced a comprehensive report which included several key recommendations for changes to the program.

Mr. Elzinga stated, "Many of the recommendations were put into effect immediately, for the 1987 crop year. For example, coverage adjustment was changed so that all crops are now adjusted separately. As a result, a producer's claim on one crop can no longer adversely affect his coverage on other crops.

(Cont'd)

Elzinga says the government has responded to farm crisis (cont'd)

"In addition, we have slowed down the rate of reduction in coverage resulting from claims. And for the first time, insurance coverage is now offered on pulse crops. Also implemented in the 1987 crop year was a recommendation to adjust differentials in stubble and fallow coverage to more accurately reflect actual yields and the impact of changing technology.

"Because crop insurance is a joint federal-provincial responsibility, the implementation of some additional panel recommendations require negotiation at the federal-provincial level. Negotiations are still underway, but I think farmers can expect to see some of these improvements to the program implemented for 1988."

PRODUCERS ASSUME RESPONSIBLITY

Looking at farm income stabilization, the Minister said Alberta has now joined plans for hogs, lambs, cow-calf, feeder cattle, slaughter cattle, sugar beets and dry edible beans, under which the federal government, the provincial government and producers have joined together to stabilize income.

The Minister stated, "With respect to the Western Grain Stabilization Act, I understand that Alberta participation in the program is now up to 81 per cent, indicating that now, more than ever before, our grain producers are willing to take responsibility for their own income stabilization.

As well he said another government program designed to benefit producers is the Crow Benefit Offset Program, which replaced the Feed Grain Market Adjustment Program last July.

Mr. Elzinga stated, "The Crow Benefit Offset Program is designed to help protect Alberta's livestock industry from the damaging effects of the federal government's method of payment of the Crow benefit. This program and the market adjustment program that came before it have provided a tremendous benefit not only for Alberta's livestock sector but for the province's agriculture industry as a whole. This program has provided about $146 million to producers.

(Cont'd)

Elzinga says government has responded to farm crisis (cont'd)

In addition to the various stabilization, insurance and emergency assistance programs, he says the Alberta Government has put into effect for the benefit of producers in recent years, the Province has made long-term investments in grain transportation through such initiatives as the 1980-81 purchase of grain hopper cars and a contribution of $240 million toward the Prince Rupert Grain Terminal in 1985.

As well he noted the government's commitment to research work which will benefit all areas of agriculture from the farmer through to food processors.

The Minister said while the government is responding to the needs of farmers, the long-term solution lies in ending the international trade conflicts and expanding Canadian and Alberta export markets.

Mr. Elzinga stated, "The measures I've mentioned are some of the many initiatives developed by the government to assist agriculture in this province. Some of these programs have been designed to combat what are, in fact, just symptoms of a much larger problem - the damaging effects of world commodity surpluses and European and American agricultural subsidization.

INTERNATIONAL SQUABBLE

"The predatory trading practices of the United States and the European Economic Community have made it essential that the government provide assistance to those sectors of our industry that have been hurt by reduced prices. However, for the long-term solution, we must look to the international stage.

He said with strong support from Alberta, Canada can play a leading role internationally in pressing for an end to agricultural policies that distort trade and drive prices down.

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Crow benefit, free trade key issues in 1988 says Minister

Alberta's minister of agriculture says the two most important issues affecting the future of agriculture in Western Canada are the Crow benefit and the Canada/U.S. Free Trade agreement.

Peter Elzinga, in a New Year interview, says if the Crow benefit was paid directly to farmers it would have a significant impact on strengthening and diversifying the agriculture industry in Western Canada.

At the same time, he says the Canada/U.S. Free Trade Agreement which was hammered out in late 1987, will provide long term benefits not only to Alberta's agriculture industry but to all sectors of the provincial economy.

The Minister, in looking ahead to 1988, said in spite of the gloomy predictions for the industry there are many opportunities and reasons for optimism.

Mr. Elzinga stated, "The government of Alberta holds as one of its highest priorities the development of a strong, diversified agricultural sector. The uncertain world grain markets and low world grain prices we face right now emphasize our need for greater diversification and efficiency.

"One of the most important factors influencing our ability to develop a diversified, stable agriculture industry -- to promote growth in our primary agriculture and value-added processing sectors -- is the method of payment of the Crow benefit.

(Cont'd)

"It is the position of the Alberta government that the current method of payment of the Crow benefit severely distorts the price of feedgrain in our province. Payment of the Crow benefit directly to producers would remove this distortion, and provide the opportunity for Alberta's livestock and value-added processing sector to grow and diversify, and to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by free trade with the United States."

The Minister said because Alberta grain producers are further from tidewater than international competitors, they require the most efficient grain handling and transportation system possible, in order to compete. A change in the method of payment of the Crow benefit will foster grain handling and transportation system efficiency.

Under the federal government's Western Grain Transportation Act (WGTA) Canadian rail companies receive a $700 million a year subsidy to haul grains to export terminals.

CROW NEEDED FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Alberta government maintains the existing method of payment does not preserve the original intent of the historic Crow freight rate. The Crow was designed as a Western development program and was not intended to subsidize the movement of western crops to export markets. The government says if the transportation assistance was paid directly to farmers it would be returned to economy through investment in Western agriculture.

Mr. Elzinga stated, "Alberta producers have indicated that they favor a change in the method of payment of the Crow benefit. A survey commissioned by the Alberta government and conducted by Angus Reid and Associates in the spring of 1987 indicated that two-thirds of Alberta producers want half or more of the federal Crow Benefit money paid directly to the producer.

"The Alberta government considers provincial choice in the method of payment of the Crow Benefit both appropriate and technically feasible.

(Cont'd)

Crow benefit, free trade key issues in 1988 says Minister (cont'd)

"Alberta has undertaken sufficient study so far to be convinced that it will be technically feasible to implement a pay the producer approach in Alberta and British Columbia, while Saskatchewan retains the current approach. We are convinced that different methods of payment can be accommodated without creating distortions in the grain market."

The Minister said any method of payment plan Alberta comes up with will include the following basic goals:

- no increase in federal funding commitments;
- no distortions within the Western Canadian grain and oilseed markets;
- no distortion to other provincial economies;
- minimal or no dilution of the Crow Benefit;
- and finally, that the project be administratively feasible, gain producer acceptance, and include provision for review of the payment mechanism.

The entire method of payment issue has become even more urgent in light of the signing of a free trade agreement between Canada and the United States, he says.

FREE TRADE

"Freer trade will enhance our opportunities in the red meat sector, where Alberta has a natural comparative advantage. It is crucial that we use this advantage as we enter into the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. We must mobilize now, and changing the method of payment is important to remaining competitive and taking advantage of our opportunities.

"The free trade issue is a matter of tremendous importance to our agriculture industry, and indeed, to all Canadians.

"Once implemented, the historic trade agreement recently signed by Canada and the U.S. will have a profound effect on all aspects of the Canadian and Alberta economies -- and in the great majority of cases, the changes will be very much for the better."

In Alberta, more than 57,000 farmers produce a wide variety of agricultural products -- most of it destined for export, says the Minister. Albertans consume about 23 per cent of the beef produced, 40 per cent of the pork, 20 per cent of the wheat and 50 per cent of the barley produced in the province.

(Cont'd)

The Minister stated, "The loss of our export markets would render more than 50 per cent of our farmers unnecessary. But farmers wouldn't be the only ones vulnerable should markets dry up for agricultural production -- one in three jobs in Alberta rely directly or indirectly on agriculture.

"Continued access to our largest international market is essential to the continued growth and prosperity of our agriculture industry. Indeed, access to the U.S. market is vital not just to our growth, but to our very survival."

In supporting the bilateral trade initiatives of the federal government, Mr. Elzinga said Alberta sought to secure and enhance access to U.S. markets, eliminate trade distorting subsidies and programs, and obtain adjustment of Canadian domestic agricultural policies to restore Alberta's natural comparative advantage and provide greater scope for value-added activity in the food and agricultural sector.

SECURE MARKET ACCESS

"Under the free trade agreement, we have obtained more secure access to the United States market for our major agricultural and food exports, such as meat and livestock, grains and oilseeds. At the same time, we have maintained the existing marketing systems for dairy and poultry products and the right to implement new supply management programs and import controls in accordance with existing GATT rules.

"The free trade agreement provides for the elimination of all Canada - U.S. agricultural tariffs over 10 years, except in the case of the Canadian fresh fruit and vegetables sector, which has been given extended protection over 20 years. This gradual phase-out of tariffs will mean that any farmers who have to make adjustments to their operations as a result of the agreement will have plenty of time in which to do so.

"Removal of the tariffs will be especially beneficial for the Alberta agri-food processing industry. And by promoting the value-added sector, the agreement will contribute to the province's overall economic diversification and stability. Alberta meat and livestock producers will also benefit greatly under free trade.

(Cont'd)

Crow benefit, free trade key issues in 1988 says Minister (cont'd)

He says although, at present, the U.S. is a relatively small market for Canadian grain and oilseed exports, Alberta producers will also benefit from the free trade agreement. The removal of U.S. tariffs on products such as canola oil, specialty oats, malting barley and wheat will increase sales for producers. The agreement between the two countries to take one another's export interests into account in dealings with third countries will further benefit the grain industry.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

"Over time, these long-term benefits will more than outweigh the agreement's short-term disadvantage to grain and oilseed producers in terms of elimination of some Western Grain Transportation Act payments, and the eventual removal of import licenses for wheat, oats and barley. I am convinced that, once we have established a level playing field, Alberta grain and oilseed producers will be more than able to compete with their American counterparts."

The Minister said because of mounting U.S. protectionism it was clear that without an agreement Alberta and Canada would find it more and more difficult to export products to the U.S.

"We could not allow ourselves to be locked out of that market. Trade with the U.S. is essential to Alberta, and to the rest Canada -- and we needed an arrangement to protect that trade. We can compete with the U.S. in all areas. The simple truth is that our farmers have become leaner and meaner than the Americans -- we've had to."

The Minister urged Albertans to demonstrate their confidence in their province by supporting this agreement: "I firmly believe that, through freer trade with the United States, and with all other nations, lies prosperity for Canada and for the province of Alberta."

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1988 Alberta Horticultural Congress may double in size

After the "huge" success of the first Alberta Horticultural Congress in November, organizers expect the 1988 edition to nearly double in size.

Although the conference is still about 11 months away, between 500 and 600 delegates and 60 or more exhibitors are expected to attend the 1988 convention which will be one of the largest of its kind in Western Canada.

Lloyd Hausher, an Alberta Agriculture specialist in Brooks and one of the organizers of the 1987 event, says early response shows more Alberta producer groups are interested in participating in the event to be held in Edmonton this year, November 3 to 5.

The first congress in Red Deer brought together about 380 delegates representing three separate groups - the Alberta Market Gardeners Association, Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association and the Alberta Fresh Vegetable Marketing Board.

These associations had organized individual conventions and annual meetings in the past, but the Red Deer congress was the first joint effort.

Hausher, a specialist with the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center, says along with the three original organizations, interest in the 1988 convention and trade show is also being shown by some of the fruit and flower growers and other horticulture producer groups.

"The 1987 congress provided an excellent opportunity for people involved in one aspect of the industry to meet people involved in some other aspect of the industry," says Hausher. "Although the horticultural organizations represent special interests, they also have a certain amount of overlap because of the nature of their businesses.

"The 37 technical and information sessions as well as the 42 exhibits at the trade show allowed delegates a chance to meet people they wouldn't normally see at their own individual conventions."

(Cont'd)

1988 Alberta Horticultural Congress may double in size (cont'd)

The 1987 congress program also allowed for tours of three central Alberta greenhouse growers including Doef's Greenhouses, a cucumber producer; Central Alberta Florist, an ornamental and cut flower grower; and Prairie Sun, Noval Enterprises waste heat greenhouse at Joffre where tomatoes and ornamental crops are produced.

More than 40 exhibitors have already committed themselves to participate in the 1988 convention and trade show which will be held at the Coast Terrace Inn in Edmonton.

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Don't let rumors get in the way of a good deal

Landlords and tenants trying to figure out an acceptable cropland rental rate for 1988 should ignore any rumors and do what's right for them, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Garth Nickorick, a farm management economist with the department, says the first step is getting the two sides to understand each others wants and needs out of any deal. The dollars and cents issues can come later.

"More than ever concern is being expressed by landlords and tenants about the level of rent for the 1988 crop season," says Nickorick. "The events of the past two years has turned a reasonably stable rental market into confusion.

"Rumors of lack of renters, renting for taxes only, bankrupt renters, subsidy payments in the wrong hands, depressed grain and oilseed prices and a general gloomy attitude to today's financial situation have all been contributing factors."

He says while landlords have traditionally held the high cards in the leasing game, neither party today is really in charge. With the tension level in the negotiation process rising, and popular conceptions taking a beating, it is time to regroup.

"The renter wants or needs an after-expense return that pays for the wear and tear on machinery and for the time spent doing the work," says the economist with the farm business management branch in Olds. "This is aside from a hoped for real profit which would strengthen the home farm or pay off fixed-asset debt.

"Landlords on the other hand want to receive enough to pay the taxes and what they consider a fair return on the use of their land asset. They usually want to receive a rental equal to those around them."

But rather than expect too much or sell themselves short based on what they've heard in land rental rumors, he says the landlord and tenant should sit down and negotiate an agreement that suits them.

(Cont'd)

Don't let rumors get in the way of a good deal (cont'd)

To assist the negotiating process, Alberta Agriculture's "Planning with Crop Choice Worksheet", can help landlords and tenants figure out the costs and returns picture.

"It is a valuable planning and negotiating tool as the revenue and expenses can be clearly shown," says Nickorick. "It will allow both parties to meet on a common footing to understand the economics and establish a rent for 1988, and it's not too early to start."

For more information or a copy of the Planning with Crop Choice Worksheet (Agdex 815-2) write to Alberta Agriculture, Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, or contact Garth Nickorick at the Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta T0M 1P0.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
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Editor's Note

Following is the seventh part of an eight-part series on farm management planning, prepared by Alberta Agriculture specialist Craig Edwards.

The series deals with some of the factors farmers and farm managers should consider in developing their own farm management plans.

Ideally the series should run sequentially from part 1 to 8, but if space or scheduling becomes a problem, each article can stand alone. If not used as a series, some articles may require minor editing.

For any further information on the series contact Craig Edwards in Olds at 556-4238 or the Agri-News Editor in Edmonton at 427-2121.

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Getting more bang from your buck
Seventh in a series

Planning for crop production in 1988 won't be so enjoyable as it was in the boom years of 1980 and 1981 when prices were higher, but farmers should be discouraged, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Craig Edwards, a farm management economist, says producers will have more difficulty finding where investing cash operating capital will give the best returns, but it's to their advantage to continue looking for and finding the places where a dollar spent will return more than a dollar within the year.

"Budgeting for crop production is very important" says Edwards a specialist with the farm business management branch in Olds. "Cash invested or spent to grow crops in 1988 must return at least one dollar within the following year for each dollar spent in 1988, so cash operating capital will be available to seed the crops in 1989.

"If it doesn't work out that way the farm operators will have less cash for operating expenses in 1989 than they had for operating expenses in 1988, unless they are able to borrow or get money elsewhere."

The economist describes the following example:

"If you're farming 1,000 cultivated acres and you expect cash expenses of $50 per acre in 1988, you'll want to get back more than $50,000 before you plant your 1989 crop.

"About $20,000 will probably be spent on machinery operating and maintenance costs and other costs that you can't change. Possibly the other $30,000 can be spent for crop inputs such as seed, fertilizer and other chemicals where you're able to make a choice of resources to get the best return.

To find where the best returns can be expected in an operation, Edwards suggests, producers learn the concept of equal marginal returns and how to apply the principle to your own expected expenses and revenues.

(Cont'd)

Getting more bang from your buck (cont'd)

The farm business management branch has some unpublished material available at Olds on making the best use of operating capital. For more information write or phone Craig Edwards, Farm Business Management Branch, Alberta Agriculture, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0 or phone 556-4248.

(Next week - Eighth and last in the series "Cost Cutting Cautions")

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Alberta's processed alfalfa - first the good news

Alberta's multi-million dollar processed alfalfa industry is in the midst of one of those good-news, bad-news situations depending on the product produced, says an Alberta Agriculture market specialist.

For an industry that turns out two primary products - alfalfa pellets and alfalfa cubes - pellet production is expected to hit a record high this year, but prices are poor, says Fred Boyce, a special commodities analyst with the department in Edmonton. And although alfalfa cube production is down about 15 per cent, prices are fairly strong.

Canada produced about 493,000 tonnes of pellets and cubes this year - an increase of nine per cent from 1986 - with Alberta being the largest single producing province.

Alberta's processed alfalfa pellet industry is expected to hit record production of 184,000 tonnes in the 1987-88 crop year, while alfalfa cube production is estimated at 90,000 tonnes, says Boyce.

Although there is some surplus product, the market analyst says the greatest influence on prices is caused by a change in Japanese market trends. The major buyer of Alberta processed alfalfa products has reduced its demand for pellets by about 60,000 tonnes this year, and is buying more of the long-fibre cubes and standard and compressed baled hay. Canada is a leading exporter of pellets, while the United States tends to dominate the alfalfa cube market.

The market analysis branch specialist made the comments in his second-quarter report on the processed alfalfa industry. The Processed Alfalfa Situation and Outlook to December 1987 is now available from Alberta Agriculture. The industry operates on a crop year which begins May 1.

About 100,000 acres of Alberta cropland produces alfalfa under contract for processing throughout the province. A new cube plant is expected to open near Stony Plain in 1988.

(Cont'd)

Alberta's processed alfalfa - first the good news

The plants manufacture two main products. Alfalfa pellets, which are about the diameter of a pencil, are a high protein source of livestock feed made from fresh-cut alfalfa which is dehydrated and compressed. Alfalfa cubes, which are about an inch square are made from alfalfa hay that is ground and compacted. The dehy pellets with a minimum of 17 per cent protein can be used in rations for all classes of livestock from dairy cows to rabbits, while the cubes with a minimum of 15 per cent protein are used mainly for ruminant animals.

"This year's pellet production is 14 per cent higher than last year and is more than double the production of two years ago when drought sharply reduced output throughout Alberta," says Boyce.

"Disposition or usage of alfalfa products has been disappointing during the early part of the crop year. Domestic sales are generally considered about normal but export demand, especially for pellets, has been very weak and consequently sales volumes are down significantly."

The specialist says Canada may be able to make up some of the Japan market loss by expanding sales into Taiwan, South Korea and Europe.

"The immediate prospect for dehy alfalfa is somewhat bleak," says Boyce. "We have record production in Canada but prices are very low. Export alfalfa pellets, f.o.b. (free on board) the plant are about $105 a tonne this year compared to about $145 a tonne at this time last year.

"By contrast the alfalfa cube situation is more promising. Export cubes, f.o.b. the plant, are about $130 a tonne right now which is good."

Along with expanded European and Asian markets, Boyce says with the U.S. cutting pellet production there many be opportunity to export Canadian pellets south of the border.

Rumors indicate alfalfa pellet sales to South Korea could increase to about 40,000 tonnes in 1988, and within five to 10 years sales to Korea could reach between 100,000 and 150,000 tonnes.

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Canadian canola oil exports increase about 60 per cent

The health features of Canadian canola oil are helping this unique Canadian product crack the vast U.S. market, says an Alberta Agriculture trade specialist.

With 1987 exports expected to pass the 100,000 tonne mark, Elton Dunk, associate trade director with the department in Edmonton, says canola oil is rapidly gaining acceptance from American food processors and consumers.

Although the final figures aren't in, Dunk says sales last year are expected to be up about 60 per cent from 1986 and could reach 125,000 tonnes of oil.

He credits a co-operative effort by the Alberta canola industry and Alberta Agriculture for getting a foot in the American market door.

"There is really excellent potential for the sale of canola oil to the United States," says Dunk. "Both the food processing industry and U.S. consumers are just now learning about the product. Initial response has been good and a major promotion is being made to further introduce industry and consumers to the value of canola oil."

In the U.S., canola oil is considered an alternative to palm, coconut and in some cases soybean oil for use in the food industry. While the price of canola oil is competitive Dunk says, emphasis is placed on its low saturated fat level, which is important to health conscious food processors and consumers.

It has only been since 1985 that the United States has recognized canola oil as an edible product. With the endorsement of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration came the opportunity for Canadian crushers and processors to develop the food processing markets.

Cont'd)

Canadian canola oil exports increase about 60 per cent (cont'd)

"The market development division of Alberta Agriculture, working in co-operation with the Alberta canola industry have co-ordinated an aggressive marketing approach to major U.S. edible oil companies during the past 20 months," says Dunk.

Canola oil is being promoted for different end-users, he says. On one hand it is being touted as a premium oil for cooking, salad oils and mayonnaises, as well as an oil with applications in the food processing industry.

One of the first hurdles in getting canola oil accepted south of the border, involves training U.S. industry how to modify their refinery operations to process semi-refined canola oil, says Dunk.

The Canadian canola industry conducted technical awareness seminars in 1986 with 18 U.S. refiners and jointly hosted canola oil processing short courses for American refiners in Saskatoon and Edmonton.

Last year, 80 major U.S. companies participated in seminars in 14 U.S. locations on the end-use applications of canola oil in food products.

As well a canola oil processing short-course in Saskatoon, and an end-user short course in Winnipeg involved company representatives contacted initially through seminars. Alberta companies participating in the 1987 programs included Canbra Foods of Lethbridge and United Oilseed Products Inc. and Alberta Terminals Canola Crushers.

"Canola oil is steadily gaining acceptance in the American marketplace," says Dunk. "The American Health Foundation of New York recently presented Procter and Gamble Company with the 1987 Food Product of the Year Award for Puritan Oil which is made from 100 per cent Canadian canola oil."

Other American campanies producing canola oil products include Colfax Inc. of Rhode Isand, Spectrum Marketing of California, Bunge Corporation of N.Y. and Wilsey Foods of California.

(Cont'd)

Canadian canola exports increase about 60 per cent (cont'd)

These companies produce canola oil that is either marketed state-wide or nationally as a product sold directly to consumers or for use by commercial food processors.

"Several other major U.S. companies are also showing keen interest in canola because of its low saturated fat levels, its positive application in diets designed to reduce risk of heart disease, and its superior performance characteristics for specific food applications," says Dunk.

In the last two years, Alberta processors working with the department on promotional efforts have included United Oilseed Products Inc. of Lloydminster; Alberta Terminals Canola Crushers at Sexsmith and Alberta Food Products of Fort Saskatchewan.

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Be alert to feed additive hazards

Livestock and pet owners should be alert to the potential hazards of feeding livestock the wrong rations, or forcing animals to eat feed they don't like, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Dr. Roy Smith, a laboratory scientist with the department in Edmonton, says he has run into a few cases where animals were severely affected because one class of livestock was given feed formulated for another class of livestock.

As well, he says, there have been instances where animals died after the owners unknowingly gave them little choice but to eat feed that was later found to contain toxic additives.

Smith's advice to farmers is to check before they mix rations designed for different classes of livestock, and switch to a different feed if animals turn their noses up at the one being offered.

The specialist with department's animal health division says the two rules of thumb are: one animal's meat may be another animal's poison; and trust your animal's judgement.

"Various natural and man-made substances are added to animal feeds for good and justifiable reasons," says Smith. "However, an additive which is beneficial to the intended animal may well be very harmful if offered to a different type of animal."

The laboratory scientist says one of the most common examples observed at the lab are sheep poisoned by copper as a result of being offered a ration designed for cattle. Sheep are extremely sensitive to copper.

He says a producer who just doesn't realize the difference between the two rations, is one reason the mix-up can occur.

"Sometimes, however, a feed company switches from the production of one animal feed to another without thoroughly cleaning their equipment and then the product will be contaminated by residues of feed additives," says Smith.

(Cont'd)

Be alert to feed additive hazards (cont'd)

"One of the most common situations involves a class of feed additives known as ionophores, which are very beneficial for cattle and poultry, but very hazardous to dogs, horses and some other animals."

Smith says a typical situation arises when animals initially refuse a new batch of feed they are offered, but given no other choice they eventually are forced to eat the rations.

"Two separate cases of dog poisoning by monensin in commercial dog food have occurred in recent weeks," says Smith. "Monensin is one of those feed additive antibiotics useful to ruminants, but is highly toxic to dogs."

Feed refusal, especially in the case of a new batch of feed, should be regarded seriously, he says. An alternative feed should promptly be offered and the refused feed should be removed and returned to the dealer or retailer.

The scientist says Alberta Agriculture's toxicology laboratory in Edmonton is developing methods for the analysis of most approved feed additives. He says a process for detecting ionophores such as monensin and salinomycin have been developed in recent months and the lab should be able to offer analysis for many other common additives in 1988.

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Contact: Dr. Roy Smith
427-3981

January 11, 1988
For immediate release

Reproduction pathologist appointed

A veterinarian specializing in livestock reproduction has been named head of the reproduction section of Alberta Agriculture's pathology branch in Edmonton.

Dr. Cornelia Kreplin, who ran her own veterinary practice in Ontario before returning to university to complete her studies, has filled the post previously held by Dr. George Klavano who retired in 1987.

The laboratory section that Kreplin heads provides a diagnostic service to livestock owners and veterinarians who encounter infertility, abortions and other reproductive losses in their livestock.

The Edmonton lab also provides backup expertise in reproductive pathology for the department's regional veterinary laboratories in Lethbridge, Airdrie and Fairview.

Kreplin was educated in Ontario, entering the University of Guelph in agriculture in 1970. She transferred into veterinary medicine and obtained her doctor of veterinary medicine degree in 1976.

She ran her own practice in Oakville, Ontario from 1976 to 1982, before returning to the University of Guelph as a graduate student specializing in the study of reproductive pathology of farm animals.

Kreplin recently completed her Ph.D. thesis, A Study Of The Role Of Ureaplasma diversum As A Cause Of Infertility In Cattle.

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Contact: Dr. Cornelia Kreplin
436-8901

January 11, 1988
For immediate release

Conference presents organizational challenge

Organizing a management conference for farm couples is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle, says Anita Lunden, co-ordinator of Alberta Agriculture's 1988 Managing Agricultural Technology For Profit conference.

And this time the pieces must all be in place by March 6, 1988.

The co-ordinator, who works with the department's farm business management branch in Olds, says the pieces involve details such as picking a location, booking the speakers, and finding sponsors to help cover the cost of the annual event.

"The location was the first piece to fall into place," says Lunden. "The Lodge at Kananaskis looked like an ideal sight, because participants like to combine this opportunity to learn about farm management with a holiday and a break from the farm routine."

With The Lodge as a starting point, the funding, program and participant parts of the total picture began to take shape. The collection of speaker "pieces" began with Ron Crowe and Jolene Brown - two favorites from last year, again booked for 1988. Then added to the program were former premier Peter Lougheed, university professors, agricultural and medical journalists, sociologists, a futurist, farmers and tax and financial management consultants, and others.

"The goal of conference organizers is to present a total picture of the skills, attitudes and issues related to successful farm management," says Lunden.

Just as with a puzzle, she says several parts of the picture are worked on at one time. While speakers were being chosen, the funding for the conference also came together as private companies and organizations came forward to supplement the basic funding provided by Alberta Agriculture and registration fees.

(Cont'd)

Conference presents organizational challenge (cont'd)

"Some sponsors, like United Farmers of Alberta, have become a major part of the picture - providing advertising and conference binders, she says. "Other sponsors provide essentials like coffee breaks, an opening reception, name tags, and help to cover printing costs."

Long standing sponsors include: Nova, Case International, UGG, TransAlta Utilities, Farm Credit Corporation, Treasury Branches, Toronto Dominion Bank, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, AGT, Alberta Wheat Pool and Elanco. Two new sponsors this year are The Co-operators and Ducks Unlimited.

"Although participants are the last pieces to actually be put in place, everything else has been arranged to fit them," says Lunden. "People is what the conference is all about. When participants start to arrive at The Lodge on Sunday, March 6, the picture will take on a life of its own and become a unique experience for everyone involved."

Anyone interested in becoming part of the picture should contact any Alberta Agriculture district office or Anita Lunden or Gerd Andres at the Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0 or phone (403) 556-4240.

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Contact: Anita Lunden
556-4240

January 11, 1988
For immediate release

Regional beef symposiums planned

Beef producers from Westlock to Fort Macleod should plan to attend one of 10 regional symposiums set for late January which should help farmers improve the reproductive efficiency of their herds.

Sponsored by Alberta Agriculture, the Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC), local agencies and private companies, the sessions will feature talks by several experts and specialists from Alberta, Montana and Wyoming.

Ross Gould, head of Alberta Agriculture's beef management branch, says advice provided by the speakers could help farmers increase the profit margin in their operations.

Running from January 18 to January 27, the day-long sessions will be offered in Fort Macleod, High River, Eckville, Olds, Wainwright, Hanna, Brooks, Westlock, Drayton Valley and St. Paul. For details contact any Alberta Agriculture district office.

Gould says the regional seminars will build on the theme of a major provincial conference sponsored by the department and the ACC in Edmonton last February.

"Improving reproduction is the key to improving income from most beef herds in Alberta," says Gould. "It is estimated that the 'average' Alberta beef producer could improve net returns by as much as $55 per cow exposed to breeding, by improving the reproductive performance of the herd.

"Speakers at the regional beef symposiums in January will be describing various ways beef producers can improve the factors which affect reproduction in their herds. They will include experts in research and beef extension from Alberta, Montana, and Wyoming where these topics have been studied for the past 15 years."

Key speakers will include Dr. Dave Bailey and Dr. Glenn Coulter from the Agriculture Canada research centre at Lethbridge, Dr. Peter Burfenning from Montana State University and Dr. Tom Dunn from the University of Wyoming.

(Cont'd)

Regional beef symposiums planned (cont'd)

Alberta Agriculture beef extension specialists and representatives from the beef industry will complete the program at the various meetings.

Gould says the regional beef symposiums are organized in three "tours" with a team of speakers working in each area.

Although the same general topics will be covered, the mix of speakers will vary from centre to centre with subjects tailored to local needs. Each symposium will include morning and afternoon sessions.

Following are symposium dates and locations:

Western Centres		Eastern Centres	
Fort Macleod	- January 18	Wainwright	- January 19
High River	- January 19	Hanna	- Janaury 20
Eckville	- January 20	Brooks	- January 21
Olds	- January 21		

North Central Centres

Westlock	- January 25
Drayton Valley	- January 26
St. Paul	- January 27

For details on the times and locations or to register for one of the sessions contact any Alberta Agriculture district office.

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Contact: Ross Gould
427-5335

January 11, 1988
For immediate release

Top Canadian horse trainer among conference speakers

JULI THORSON

An Ontario trainer and an Oregon competitor and writer will be among the guest speakers in Red Deer in mid-January at the fourth annual Alberta Horse Breeders and owners Conference.

Jim Day, trainer for Canada's leading racing stable, SamSon Farm at King City, Ontario and Juli Thorson, an active competitor on the Pacific Northwest Paint Horse Circuit and editorial director of "The Lariat" magazine will address the January 16 and 17 conference at the Capri Centre.

Day, who will speak on the theme "Training to Win", was 18 when he launched his riding career by winning the North American Junior Jumping Championship. Two years later, he tied a world puissance record of seven feet one inch and won the the North American championship.

As well he was part of the Canadian gold medal-winning team at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, and won the Prix des France and the World Championship Nations Cup at La Baule, France.

Currently training Thoroughbreds for Ernie Samuel's SamSon Farm, Day was named outstanding trainer and winner of the 1985 Sovereign Award.

During the afternoon program, January 16 his Training to Win talk will describe the business of operating a training stable - looking after clientele and being profitable at the same time.

That evening he will be guest speaker at the Alberta Hunter Society awards dinner, speaking on the theme "If I Knew Then What I Know Now".

(Cont'd)

Top Canadian horse trainer among conference speakers (cont'd)

Juli Thorson of Beaverton, Oregon is the third generation of her family to own, raise and exhibit horses.

She is an active competitor on the Pacific Northwest Paint Horse Circuit and recently campaigned a gelding she trained to an APHA Championship. She is also a former endurance rider with several "Best Conditioned" awards.

Along with being editorial director for "The Lariat" she is a contributor to several horse magazines.

Using the theme "Bootstrap Principle: How Those in the Horse Industry Can Help Themselves" her talk will look at how horse breeders and owners can cope with the poor economy.

The Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference is the leading conference of its kind in Canada. Along with Jim Day and Juli Thorson other noted national and international speakers will address the two-day event.

Cost of the convention is $75 per person or $125 per couple. Registrations will be accepted up to the opening of the conference January 15.

For more information contact Alberta Agriculture's horse industry branch in Calgary at 297-6650 or in Edmonton at 427-8905.

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Contact: Les Burwash
297-6650

Editor's Note

Following is the last part of an eight-part series on farm management planning, prepared by Alberta Agriculture specialist Craig Edwards.

Ideally the series should run sequentially from part 1 to 8, but if space or scheduling becomes a problem, each article can stand alone. If not used as a series, some articles may require minor editing.

For any further information on the series contact Craig Edwards in Olds at 556-4238 or the Agri-News Editor in Edmonton at 427-2121.

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

January 11, 1988
For immediate release

Cost cutting cautions
(Last in a series)

Farmers trying to cut costs when developing a written plan for the next season, will soon learn that it is easier said than done, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Cutting costs is difficult because it is impossible to change only one thing at a time, says Craig Edwards, a farm management specialist with the farm business management branch in Olds. Lowering a cost in one place might cause a higher cost in some other part of the operation.

"Using less cultivation to cut cash costs for fuel, labor, repairs and so on may cause higher costs for weed spraying or cause lower yields for some crops," says Edwards. "Much information must be considered and alternatives compared to make good decisions on cutting production costs."

Some unpublished material prepared at the farm business management branch to help farmers analyze their operating budgets to cut some costs is available by writing to Craig Edwards, Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0 or phone 556-4248.

Contact: Craig Edwards
556-4248

For immediate release

Alberta farmers could spice up their lives

Food processors and farmers must work together to develop the technology, the products and markets that will support Alberta's special crops industry, says a long-time industry representative.

Percy Gitelman, who has been involved with food processing for 40 years, told producers at a recent provincial conference Alberta has the potential to be a leader in special crops production.

But, he says, industry needs the support of farmers to develop new techniques, new products and new consumer markets.

Gitelman, is president of UFL Foods Inc. of Toronto and the Alberta Industrial Mustard Co. in Edmonton. He made his comments at a recent conference sponsored by Alberta Agriculture and the Pulse Growers Association of Alberta.

Gitelman, whose companies focus on processing special crops which produce condiments, flavorings and dried-food products, told Alberta producers there is opportunity for them to grab a share of a billion dollar herb and spice industry.

"I believe we need to adopt an agri-industrial philosophy," he said. We can't look at it as producers over here and industry over there. We need to adopt a philosophy of the two working together helping each other develop an industry for mutual benefit."

The company executive described his concept of making Alberta known as "Nutrient Valley". He said the province has the natural resources, the talent and facilities to develop a comprehensive food production and processing industry.

"Rather than have independent projects, I can see an integrated system where we have crops produced and harvested for an agriculture refining system which produces food products for consumers, feeds for the livestock industry, pharmaceuticals and other products.

"I can see a total package concept which makes efficient use of our raw materials. And I suggest monies from the Heritage Trust Fund could be used to provide the leadership and research in developing the concept."

(Cont'd)

Alberta farmers could spice up their lives (cont'd)

Gitelman's companies process two major categories of condiments including herbs and spices and vegetables such as garlic, onion and horseradish. They also process peas and lentils to make the base for dry soup mixes.

He said one of the key factors in expanding special crop markets in Canada is developing new processing technology and new food products.

"World trade in herbs and spices amounts to about $1.2 billion a year," he said. "In Canada we import many of these flavor enhancing products but there is no reason that many cannot be grown and processed here in the future. Our companies are involved in the research and development of the technology which will allow us to economically process many of these products in Canada and Alberta."

Gitleman said herbs and spices cover a broad category of crops ranging from oregano and basil, to peppermint and nutmeg. There are about 32 standard crops in the world described as herbs and spices and Alberta can grow about 21 of these varieties.

The company president says modern processing of herbs and spices involves expensive high tech equipment. Commercial food processing presents the biggest market for herbs and spices and it's the essential oil and resins of the crop that contain the flavor.

Gitelmen said in just about every herb or spice crop, only about one to five per cent of the plant is oil or resin, while the rest is fibre. The challenge for industry is to develop new technology to efficiently and economically extract these oils and resins.

Traditional processing involves the use of steam or solvents to extract the oil, although research is being done in Edmonton with a gas extraction process.

As well, irradiation is a relatively new process being investigated. Gitelman says Canada is a leader in irradiation technology, but industry would have to secure world markets to justify investment in this food processing system.

(Cont'd)

Farmers could spice up their lives (cont'd)

Discussing the processing of vegetable condiments such as garlic, onion and horseradish, he said these products are sold in dried form.

While there is a dehydration plant in Oakville, Ontario, Canada imports most of these additives from California. Although further research is needed, Gitelman says new technology using a microwave vaccum drying technique could one day be used in an Alberta plant to process these products in Western Canada.

In using peas and lentils for soup mixes he said his company is working with the University of Alberta, Alberta Agriculture's Food Processing Development Centre at Leduc and Farming for the Future research money to perfect a new extruding process which will allow for faster more efficient production.

He said as technology develops opportunities will exist for increased production of these special crops in Alberta.

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Contact: Blair Roth - Tom Krahn
381-5127 362-3391

January 11, 1988
For immediate release

Producers need to fine tune irrigation practices

Climatic cycles, farming economics, new crops and improved technology will be some of the key areas covered in Lethbridge later this month at a conference designed to look at "Irrigation into the 1990s".

Irrigation farmers along with all other water users and managers are invited to participate in the two-day conference January 25 and 26 at the Lethbridge Lodge Hotel.

Bob Riewe, an irrigation management specialist with Alberta Agriculture in Lethbridge, says advice on how to fine tune farming operations is a common thread in the conference theme.

"Irrigation farmers along with other producers have been faced with the serious problems confronting the agricultural industry," says Riewe. "And there are likely to be a few more tough years ahead.

"This conference doesn't offer any quick-fixes for the problems, but it will emphasize fine tuning an operation and taking a closer look at management decisions."

Topics to be covered include forage seed potential, irrigation economics, system modifications, pump and power unit selection, irrigated pasture, benefits of co-operative water development, new irrigated crop varieties, soil fertility and others.

Guest speakers among the more than two dozen specialists scheduled to address the conference include Dick Ericksen of Othello, Washington talking about the multiple resource-use planning used in the Columbia River Basin; Peter Melynchuk, assistant deputy minister of Alberta Environment talking about the Oldman Dam in southern Alberta; and Laurie Tollesson, of the Saskatchewan Irrigation Development Centre who'll be taking a look at the future of irrigation.

(Cont'd)

Producers need to fine tune irrigation practices (cont'd)

The conference is expected to underscore several key points. Because of tighter economics it is more important for farmers to think twice about management decisions; the irrigation industry needs to place more emphasis on multiple-resource use projects that benefit all resource users; and it is important for the industry to increase public awareness of the benefits of irrigation.

Cost of the two-day conference which includes an evening banquet and lunches is $45 per person.

For more information or to pre-register contact Dave Monaghan 381-5136; Bob Riewe at 381-5141; Lloyd Healy at 654-2161; or Mike Clawson at 381-5237.

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Contact: Bob Riewe
381-5141

January 11, 1988
For immediate release

December closed out a very mild year

Alberta got November's weather in December says an agricultural climatologist with Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton.

Peter Dzikowski, with the conservation and development branch, says average temperatures for December were 6.3 Celsius (C) above normal. Temperatures that mild usually occur in November.

Some of the average December temperatures reported across Alberta were: -7.0 C at Peace River, 8.3 C above normal; -4.5 C at Red Deer, 6.9 C above normal; and -1.7 C at Lethbridge, 4.1 C above normal.

Precipitation amounts for December were generally well below normal, he says, except at Fort McMurray and Coronation, which reported 27.8 millimetres (mm) and 20.2 mm respectively, which was slightly above normal.

In the Peace River block, precipitation amounts varied from 9.5 mm at Grande Prairie, 30 per cent of normal, to 14.9 mm at Peace River, 69 per cent of normal. Central and northern parts of Alberta reported about 10 mm of precipitation, but amounts varied from only 2.6 mm at Rocky Mountain House, 12 per cent of normal, to 12.9 mm at Lethbridge, 59 per cent of normal.

Looking back at the past year, Dzikowski says with the average annual temperature for 17 stations across Alberta 3.5 C above normal, 1987 was one of the warmest years on record.

"Annual temperatures this warm occur a couple of times in a century," says the climatologist. "Monthly mean temperatures were well above normal every month, except for July and August. The greatest temperature departures from normal have been in the winter months, which have been very mild. January and February, 1987 average temperatures in Alberta were about 11 C and 7 C above normal, respectively."

The 1987 annual total precipitation for 17 stations in Alberta was 400.2 mm, 10 per cent below the long-term average of 450.7 mm. The annual total values varied from a low of 258.9 mm at Medicine Hat, 26 per cent below normal, to a high of 506.6 mm at High Level, 31 per cent above normal.

(Cont'd)

December closed out a very mild year (cont'd)

The specialist says monthly precipitation totals were below normal five of the first six months of 1987, causing stress to crops through the end of June and into July.

Heavy showers brought relief to most areas and contributed to above normal precipitation totals for July and August. Precipitation totals for September through December were well below normal creating dry surface soil layers.

"Overall, 1987 had a very mild winter with near normal summer temperatures and a very mild fall," says Dzikowski. "Monthly precipitation totals were below normal all months except March, July and August."

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Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

January 11, 1988
For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

SEED CLEANING PLANTS ASSOCIATION TO MEET

Supporters of Alberta's seed cleaning co-operatives will be in Edmonton in late January for the annual convention of the Association of Alberta Co-op Seed Cleaning Plants Ltd. Association members and managers from the 77 seed cleaning plants across Alberta will be at the Westin Hotel January 21 to 23 for the 35th annual meeting which will take a look at future agriculture trends. Dr. Bob Church will be the keynote speaker at the conference which will be opened by Alberta Agriculture Associate Minister Shirley Cripps. Other speakers at the conference will include Alberta Agriculture specialists Bob Park, Fred Boyce, Blair Shaw, Wayne Jackson, Larry Welsh, Bob Nelson, Murray McLelland and Cal Brandley who will cover topics from seed production and marketing to agricultural law. Edmonton TV weatherman Bill Matheson will also give a talk on weather patterns. Along with the speakers the conference will receive the association's annual reports, discuss resolutions and finalize the 1988 budget. A ladies' program is offered during the convention and the seed cleaning plant managers will also hold their annual meeting on January 22. For more information on the conference contact Murray McLelland in Lacombe at 782-4641.

AGRICULTURE WEEK BEGINS MARCH 13

The 1988 Agriculture Week in Alberta will be marked March 13 to 19. The event which features several special programs to recognize and raise awareness of the importance of agriculture will be organized by the non-profit Agaware organization. Wayne Crouse of Edmonton was recently named co-ordinator of the Agaware program, replacing Diana Barton of Okotoks who resigned in 1987. Agriculture Week will be kicked off with the annual Agriculture Hall of Fame banquet in Edmonton. For more information on Agriculture Week activities contact Wayne Crouse in Edmonton at 477-0071.

(Cont'd)

POULTRY WELFARE ON CONFERENCE AGENDA

The animal welfare issue and how it affects the poultry industry will be one of the key agenda items discussed at the 37th annual Alberta Poultry Industry Conference in Red Deer in late February. Mike Shirley , past president of the Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Dr. David Fraser, with the animal research centre in Ottawa will speak on the topic during the February 29 to March 2 conference at the Capri Centre. The conference involves several producer groups and marketing boards including the Alberta Turkey Growers Marketing Board, the Alberta Egg and Fowl Marketing Board, the Hatching Egg Producers, the Alberta Poultry Hatchery Association, the Alberta Chicken Producers Marketing Board, and the Alberta Commercial Egg Producers Association. Along with the business sessions for each association, guest speakers will also talk on issues such as the impact of federal tax reforms on farmers, free trade, and poultry health issues. For more information on the conference contact Gerry Patsula in Edmonton at 427-5089.

SWINE BREEDING SEMINARS PLANNED FOR JANUARY

The Alberta Swine Breeders Association and Alberta Agriculture have organized three seminars for producers to be held the third week of January. The Alberta pig breeding regional seminars will be offered in Barrhead January 19, Red Deer January 20 and Lethbridge January 21. Several specialists including Dr. Paul Hemsworth, an animal behaviorist from Werribee, Australia; Art Lange, supervisor of Alberta Agriculture's swine improvement programs; Dr. Doug Hunter, a private veterinarian from Sundre; and Dierdre Conway an Olds College instructor, will participate in the sessions. Topics to be covered will include boar management, foot care of breeding stock, and effects of human-pig relationships on production. Each session is to run from 9:30 a.m. to about 3:30 p.m. The $20 registration fee includes lunch. For more information or to register contact any Alberta Agriculture district office or regional swine specialist.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News Briefs (cont'd)

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE REPORT AVAILABLE

A national report on the role of farm women is available free from the Canadian group that authored the book. "Growing Strong: Women in Agriculture" is available from the Calgary office of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The 222-page book describes the conditions and roles of women working in agriculture, as well as the various activities and projects at the family, community, and national levels. The chapters cover subjects ranging from the needs and resources of farm women, to legal and economic issues, women as non-family farm workers and a measurement of women's contribution to Canadian agriculture. For a copy of the book or more information write the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 220 - 4 Avenue S.E., Calgary, Alberta, T2G 4X3 or phone Marnee Manson at 292-6672.

GIRLS HONORED FOR CARD DESIGNS

The official 1987 Alberta Agriculture greeting cards were designed by two Alberta 4-H members. Diane De Konig of Fort Macleod and Connie Grohn of Westlock, both 14, were winners in the annual Christmas card design competition conducted by the department's 4-H branch. De Konig, a member of the 4-H Midnight Riding Horse Club, designed the card which was used for the greeting from Alberta Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga. Grohn, a member of the Linaria Multi Club, designed the card which was selected by Associate Agriculture Minister Shirley Cripps. The winners, were chosen from 18 entries.

LAST CALL FOR ALBERTA PORK SEMINAR

A final reminder to Alberta pork producers and industry representatives to get their registrations in for the 1988 Banff Pork Seminar at the Banff Springs Hotel, January 27 to 29. Several key speakers have been lined up to discuss areas of swine health, housing, herd management and meat production. For seminar registration details contact the University of Alberta faculty of extension at 432-3029 in Edmonton.

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

Agriculture Coming Events

1988

Unifarm Annual Convention
Edmonton Inn
Edmonton, Alberta.....January 11 - 14
Willow Webb - Edmonton - 451-5912

Western Canadian Society of Horticulture, '88 Convention
Mayfield Inn
Edmonton, Alberta.....January 13 - 16
Betty Vladicka - 973-3351 - Edmonton

Alberta Cow Calf Association - Annual Meeting
Edmonton, Alberta.....January 15
Alban Bugej - Elk Point - 724-2296

Dairy Farmers of Canada
Pan Pacific Hotel
Vancouver, B.C.....January 19 - 21
Contact - 613-236-9997

Association of Alberta Co-op Seed Cleaning Plants Ltd. - Annual Meeting
Westin Inn
Edmonton, Alberta.....January 21 - 23
Martin Daniels - Wainwright - 842-2344

Farm Equipment Dealers' Association of Alberta - B.C.
Fantasyland Hotel
West Edmonton Mall, Edmonton, Alberta.....January 21 - 23
William Lipsey - Calgary - 250-7581

Alternative Farm Enterprises Conference
Manning, Alberta.....January 22
or
Peace River, Alberta.....January 23
Manning or Peace River Agriculture Offices - 836-3351 or 624-6205

"Irrigation into the Nineties" conference
Lethbridge Lodge Hotel
Lethbridge, Alberta.....January 25 -26
Bob Riewe - Lethbridge - 381-5136

Pulse Growers' Association of Alberta
Annual Meeting
Capri Centre Hotel
Red Deer, Alberta.....January 25
Blair Roth - 381- 5125

Holistic Resource Management in Practice
Vagabond Inn
Regina, Saskatchewan.....January 25 - 30
Sherri Grant - Val Marie - (306) 298-2268

(Cont'd)

Agriculture Coming Events (cont'd)

Banff Pork Seminar
Banff Springs Hotel
Banff, Alberta.....January 27 - 29
University of Alberta - Faculty of Extension - Edmonton - 432-2406

Alberta Canola Growers Association Annual Convention
Edmonton Inn
Edmonton, Alberta.....January 27 - 29
Marcel Maisonneuve - Edmonton - 454-0844

Provincial Agriculture Service Board Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer, Alberta.....January 31 - February 3
Ferrin Leavitt - Edmonton - 427-2171

Alberta Dairymen's Association
80th Provincial Dairy Convention
Convention Inn
Edmonton, Alberta.....February 1 - 3
Bette Paterson - Edmonton - 453-5942

Beef Cow-Calf Production Course
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....February 1 - 5
Ralph Kunkel - Olds College - 556-8344

GATT - Free Trade Seminar
Marlborough Inn
Calgary, Alberta..... February 1
Eileen Grant - Calgary - 250-7068

Alberta Beef Symposium
Live cattle marketing - Options for the future
Edmonton.....February 2 - 3
Doug Walkey - 340-7612

Western Barley Growers Association, Annual Meeting
Saskatoon Inn
Saskatoon, Sask.....February 3 - 5
Derwin Massey - Stettler - 883-2503

Feeder Associations of Alberta
Fantasyland Hotel
Edmonton, Alberta.....February 5 - 6
Ron Lane - 427-5096

Purebred Beef Cattle Marketing Workshop
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....February 8 - 12
Ralph Kunkel - Olds College - 556-8344

(Cont'd)

Agriculture Coming Events (cont'd)

CN Grain Transportation Meeting
Boyle Community Hall
Boyle, Alberta.....February 9
Kathy Markoff - Edmonton - 421-6671

What's in Stock For You?
Travelodge Motel
Saskatoon, Saskatchwan.....February 9 - 11
Keith LePourde - Regina - (306) 787-4657

CN Grain Transportation Meeting and Lunch
Alliance Community Hall
Alliance, Alberta.....February 11
Kathy Markoff - Edmonton - 421-6671

Alberta Holstein Association Annual Meeting
Black Knight Inn
Red Deer, Alberta.....February 19
Bill Kamps - Lacombe - 782-3957

CN Grain Transportation Meeting and Lunch
Oyen Legion Hall
Oyen, Alberta.....February 23
Kathy Markoff - Edmonton - 421-6671

CN Grain Transportation Meeting and Lunch
Beiseker Community Hall
Beiseker, Alberta.....February 24
Kathy Markoff - Edmonton - 421-6671

Alberta Poultry Industry Conference - 37th Annual
Capri Centre
Red Deer, Alberta.....February 29 - March 2
Gerry Patsula - 427-5089

CN Grain Transportation Meeting
Vermilion Legion Hall
Vermilion, Alberta.....March 1
Kathy Markoff - Edmonton - 421-6671

CN Grain Transportaion Meeeting
Manning Elks boys Centre
Manning, Alberta.....March 3
Kathy Markoff - Edmonton - 421-6671

Calgary Seed Fair and Hay Show - 40th Annual
Stampede Park
Calgary, Alberta.....March 5 - 8
Doug Mackie - 282-0134

(Cont'd)

Calgary Spring Bull Sale
Stampede Park
Calgary, Alberta.....March 6 - 8
Alberta Cattle Breeders Association - 261-0266

Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit 1988 (MATFP)
Kananaskis Lodge
Mount Allan, Alberta.....March 6 - 9
Gerd Andres - Olds - 556-4240

CN Grain Transportation Meeting
Sexsmith Civic Centre
Sexsmith, Alberta.....March 9
Kathy Markoff - Edmonton - 421-6671

Alberta Dairy Seminar
Banff Springs Hotel
Banff, Alberta.....March 9 - 11
Val Smyth - Edmonton - 432-2406

Agriculture Week '88
Special Alberta events .....March 13 - 19

Accent 88 - Taking Stock
Market outlook conference for grains, oilseed and livestock
Marlborough Inn
Calgary, Alberta.....March 15 - 16
Lois Davis - Edmonton - 427-5387

Farming for the Future Conference
Marlborough Inn
Calgary, Alberta.....March 18
Dr. Yilma Teklemariam - Edmonton - 427-1956

"The Future of Prairie Agriculture" conference
Saskatoon Inn
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.....March 21 - 22
Judith Maxwell, Economic Council of Canada, Box 527, Ottawa, Ont.

Canola Council of Canada - Annual Convention
Westin Bayshore Inn
Vancouver, B.C. .....March 28 - 30
Convention office - 301 - 433 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Western Premiers Conference (1988)
Polices that Impact on Soil and Water Conservation
Winnipeg, Manitoba.....March 28 - 29
Paul Barlott - Edmonton - 422-4385

National Soil Conservation Week
Special Alberta events.....April 10 - 16
John Hermans - Edmonton - 422-4385

(Cont'd)

Agriculture coming events (cont'd)

Alberta Agricultural Economics Association - Annual Conference
Red Deer, Alberta.....April 13 - 14
Linda Chase Wilde - 432-5694

Aggie Days (School Tours)
Stampede Park
Calgary, Alberta.....April 14 - 15
Ag. Department, Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Assoc. - 261-0266

Holstein Canada National Convention
Skyline and Palliser Hotels
Calgary, Alberta.....April 15 - 21
Isabel McPherson - Calgary - 291-0325

Spring Dairy Classic - Holstein '88
Stampede Grounds and Skyline Hotel
Calgary, Alberta.....April 15 - 16
Isabel McPherson - 291-0325

Sixth Annual I.W.R.A. World Water Congress on Water Resources
Ottawa, Ontario.....May 29 - June 3
Larry Spiess - Akos Pungor - Lethbridge - 381-5152 - 381-5140

4-H on Parade
Stampede Park
Calgary, Alberta.....June 3 - 6
Ag. Dept. Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Association - 261-0266

American Dairy Science Association Annual Conference
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta.....June 26 - 29
Dairy Processing Branch - Wetaskiwin - 429-2735

Calgary Exhibition and Stampede - International Stock Show
Stampede Park
Calgary, Alberta.....July 8 to 17
Ag. Dept. Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Association - 261-0266

Soil and Water Conservation Society
43rd Annual Conference
Columbus, Ohio.....July 31 - August 3
John Hermans - Edmonton - 422-4385

International Conference on Dryland Farming
Amarillo/Bushland, Texas.....August 15 - 19
U.S.D.A. Conservation and Production Research Laboratory
P.O. Drawer 10, Bushland, Texas, 79012, U.S.A.

(Cont'd)

Agriculture coming events (cont'd)

International Irrigation Exposition and Technical Conference
"Making Deserts Bloom Worldwide - Panacea or Pandora's Box?"
Las Vegas, Nevada..... November 6 - 9
Akos Pungor - Lethbridge - 381-5140

Canadian Western Agribition
Regina Exhibition Grounds
Regina, Saskatchewan.....November 26 - December 2
Mark Allan - Regina - (306) 565-0565

Coming Agriculture Events (cont'd)

Coming Agricultural Events

1. Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions coming in April, May, June, July 1988 or any events omitted in the attached list? Please state the name of the event.

2. What are the dates? Please be sure to state whether 1988 or 1989.

3. Where is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

4. Please give the name, city or town, and phone number of a contact person for each event listed.

5. This form has been completed by (organization):

Please return this form by March 22, 1988 to:

Print Media Branch
Information Services Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5T6

(Coming Agricultural Events is published four times a year in Agri-News. The next edition will be printed April 4, 1988.)

AGRI-NEWS

January 18, 1988

CANADIANA
FEB 15 1988

For immediate release

This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

January 18, 1988
For immediate release

Top quilt to be judged in Camrose

Judges will be looking for the top Alberta-made quilt in mid-February at the first Canada Packers Alberta Quilt Competition finals in Camrose.

The provincial winner will be selected from a field of 45 quilts which themselves were first place winners in local quilt competitions sponsored in 1987 by 65 chartered Alberta agricultural societies.

From these entries judges will pick the top three quilts, with the first place winner being bought by Canada Packers to launch its quilt collection in Alberta.

The food processing company sponsors similar competitions in Ontario and Manitoba and has established quilt collections in those provinces. The provincial competition in Alberta is jointly sponsored by Canada Packers, the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies (AAAS) and Alberta Agriculture.

The final round of the competition is being held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the agricultural societies association. The winner will be announced at the AAAS annual banquet February 12. The quilts will be on display at the Duggan Mall in Camrose, February 11 to 13.

Murray Stewart, public relations manager for Canada Packers Inc. in Toronto will be in Camrose to present the $900 cheque to the first place winner.

The agricultural societies association will present the second place winner with $300, while the Camrose Regional Exhibition and Agricultural Society will provide $200 for the third place winner.

The top three winners will each receive bedside quilt racks from Maggestic Farms, Grimshaw, and corsages from Peterson's Florists, Camrose.

Other sponsors supporting the competition are Chintz's Fabrics, Edmonton, Vines Restaurant, Olds, Look Sound Glasses, Edmonton, Alberta Government Telephones, and Sundogs and Northern Lights, Lindbrook.

(Cont'd)

Top quilt to be judged in Camrose (cont'd)

Rae Hunter, project chairperson, described the first annual Alberta competition as a "historical event" and praised Alberta agricultural societies for their "tremendous support".

Anyone wanting tickets for the February 12 AAAS banquet can call association secretary/treasurer, Eve Cockle, in Edmonton at 427-2171.

In conjunction with the quilt judging event, a quilt workshop for quilters and judges is being held February 12 in Camrose. Judy Villett an Edmonton quilter, consultant and instructor will lead the workshop which will look at "The Evolution of the Quilt".

The 1988-89 Canada Packers Alberta Quilt Competition will begin later this month. Hunter says the guidelines for the size of the quilt and rules and regulations are unchanged this year. For more information on the competition contact Rae Hunter at 427-2171 or Chris Maggs of Grimshaw at 332-4821.

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Contact: Rae Hunter
427-2171

January 18, 1988
For immediate release

Computerized farm safety game available to schools

Alberta's farm safety message has gone hi-tech with a brand new computer game designed to test the skills of elementary school students.

"Locked Maze" - an adventure into farm safety, is a computer disk package developed jointly by Alberta Agriculture and Esso Petroleum Canada.

Made for use in Apple 2C or 2E computers the game is intended to be entertaining and challenging for school children while teaching a message of farm safety.

Solomon Kyeremanteng, manager of Alberta Agriculture's farm safety program, says the game is available free to Alberta schools, upon request. Some 140 schools in the province have already received the educational tool. The computer package complements the Child Guide to Farm Safety booklet which has been published by the department and used in Alberta schools for 11 years.

The manager says Locked Maze is "much improved and far more sophisticated" than the original pilot computer game developed for the farm safety program several years ago.

"The computer package was developed for those children who prefer the challenge of computer games or just want to try hi-tech exercises," says Kyeremanteng. "The Locked Maze program complements but is not tied to the Child Guide to Farm Safety. The computer package has a similar message to the guide, but it is different."

Designed for two skill levels - kindergarten to Grade 3 and Grade 4 to 6 - Locked Maze invites children to journey down a maze path towards a secret window message which, once solved, will reveal the keys to farm safety.

Locked areas are encountered along the maze path. By inserting a key in the lock, farm safety situations are revealed. By solving the problem, the lock will open. After a short walk down the maze path another locked area awaits to challenge the children.

(Con't)

Computerized farm safety game available to schools (cont'd)

The player must progress error free through different game phases. If a mistake is made at any point the player will automatically be returned to the starting position.

"This feature presents a real challenge to children and some may find it a little frustrating," says Kyeremanteng. "But we did that on purpose. We wanted them to think about farm health and safety and realize that in real life farming situations, if you make a mistake, you don't always get a second chance."

Locked Maze has brightly colored and lively graphics and a very realistic sound effects system, says the manager.

Kyeremanteng acknowledged the support of Esso in developing the material.

"This program wouldn't have been possible without the assistance of Esso Petroleum Canada. Their support and confidence in our farm safety program is sincerely appreciated."

For further information on the "Locked Maze" program contact Alberta Agriculture, Farm Safety Program, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6 or call 427-2186.

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Contact: Solomon Kyeremanteng
427-2186

January 18, 1988
For immediate release

About $140,000 loaned to 4-H members

About $140,000 has been loaned province-wide by Alberta Treasury Branches in the first year of a project designed to further the work and experience of Alberta 4-H members.

George Lane, general manager of agriculture credit for Alberta Treasury Branches in Edmonton, says the institution is pleased with the initial response to the loan program announced in October.

Under the plan, any 4-H boy or girl between 10 and 21 years of age, could apply for a maximum $1,000 loan to be used to buy marketable livestock for beef, sheep or swine club projects. The loans are co-signed by parents.

"We're quite delighted with the interest shown and we expect that participation will increase in future years, as more people become familiar with the project," says Lane.

Most of the money was loaned to 4-H beef club members participating in the market steer project. This involves buying a steer calf in the fall and raising it for sale the following year. All club project calves must be bought and registered by December 1.

Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agriculture specialist in Edmonton says the loans could represent about 140 of the 4,200 steer calves raised by 4-H beef club members each year.

Wiegman says the Treasury Branch program will enable more participation in club projects, and provide members with money management experience.

Lane says the program promotes the 4-H philosophy of "learn to do by doing".

"We want these young men and women to learn business by coming in and getting started, and appreciate the fact that it costs money to raise their animal," he says.

(Cont'd)

The loan program was part of a three point 4-H support program announced by Treasury Branches last fall. Along with offering loans the company is also creating seven $1,000 scholarships to be awarded in each of the seven 4-H regions in Alberta starting in 1988, and a bronze, silver, gold and platinum medallion program recognizing levels of achievement reached by club members.

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Contact: George Lane
493-7182

January 18, 1988
For immediate release

New food scientist appointed in Brooks

Dr. Nancy Crowe has been appointed as food scientist at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center in Brooks.

Crowe is a recent graduate from the food science department at the University of Guelph, where her doctoral thesis research included work on the chlorination process of soft flour. She replaces Dr. Terry Smyrl who resigned in 1987.

Raised on a dairy farm in Nova Scotia, Crowe obtained a bachelor of science degree in agricultural chemistry in 1981, and a master of science degree in 1984 from McGill University.

In her position at the research centre Crowe will be responsible for the food processing and quality evaluation program which provides extension services to processors and also conducts applied research. Modified atmosphere packaging of horticultural products is an area of special interest to the food scientist.

Crowe is a member of several food science associations including The Canadian Institute of Food Science and Technology, American Association of Cereal Chemists, and the Institute of Food Technology (U.S.A.).

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Contact: Dr. Nancy Crowe
362-3391

January 18, 1988
For immediate release

Lakeland members gearing for agriculture in the '90s

Gearing Up For Agriculture In The 1990's is the theme of the Lakeland Forage Association's annual symposium being held in two locations in early February.

Guest speakers will discuss topics ranging from new technology that will affect farming to the impact of free trade on agriculture.

For the convenience of association members one session will be held at the MacArthur Inn in Lac La Biche, February 4, with the program repeated at Goodridge Hall, in Goodridge, February 5. Both symposiums begin with registration at 9:30 a.m.

In the morning session, Dr. Roy Berg, dean of agriculture at the University of Alberta, will discuss "developing the supercow". Berg, involved in cross-breeding research at the university, will discuss various cross-breeding programs and research results.

In the afternoon session, Alberta Agriculture specialist Dr. Joe Rosario and University of Lethbridge professor Dr. Jim Penton will discuss the Canada/U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

Rosario, director of the department's trade policy secretariat will discuss the government's view of free trade and its affect on agriculture. The speaker has been actively involved in the free trade discussions.

Penton, chairman of the U of L history department, will discuss his concerns with the possible effects of free trade on agriculture. Penton, also owns a family farm in southern Saskatchewan.

The program will end with a presentation on the major activities of the forage association.

The $10 registration fee includes lunch.

For more information contact the Alberta Agriculture district offices in Lac La Biche, at 623-5218 or Bonnyville at 826-3388.

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Contact: Harvey Yoder
623-5218

January 18, 1988
For immediate release

Seminars to look at using dairy forages

Alberta dairymen are urged to attend one of three "down to earth" seminars planned for early February designed to give producers the latest advice on how to grow, store and get the best feeding results from forages.

The Dairy-Quality Forage Series, organized by Alberta Agriculture will be held in Lethbridge February 9, Olds February 10 and Nisku February 11.

The day-long sessions will highlight the "how to" aspects of growing and feeding forages, says Brian Rhiness, the department's provincial dairy production specialist in Wetaskiwin.

Rhiness says specialists participating in the series will be providing practical advice to dairymen on how to establish, maintain and utilize high quality forages.

The February 9 Lethbridge seminar will be held in the Centennial Room at the exhibition grounds grandstand from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration is $15. Pre-registration would be appreciated.

Speakers will include Dr. Mike Hanna and Dr. Lyle Rode of the Agriculture Canada research station in Lethbridge. Hanna will speak on establishing and maintaining high quality, high yielding forage stands, while Rodes will speak on the effects of bypass protein on milk production, and the impact of forages on butterfat depression.

Also at the Lethbridge seminar, Rick Corbett, an Alberta Agriculture dairy nutritionist will talk on formulating rations with high quality forages.

For further information or to pre-register contact regional dairy specialist Tracy Dow at 381-5109.

The Dollars and Sense of Quality Forage seminar will be offered in the Duncan Marshall Building at Olds College, February 10, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration is $15 per person or $25 per couple. Deadline is January 29.

(Cont'd)

Seminars to look at using dairy forages (cont'd)

Speakers will include Dr. Vern Baron, of the Agriculture Canada research station at Lacombe, talking about the effect of the time of cutting on forage quality; Dr. Dave Mertens, of the Dairy Forage Research Centre of Madison Wisconsin, talking about feeding high quality alfalfa; and Dr. Lyle Rode, of the Agriculture Canada research station in Lethbridge, talking about feeding cereal silages.

For more information or to register contact Steve Archibald, 556-4220, Dennis Lowry, 948-8521 or Andre Visscher, 948-8519.

The Difference in Dairying seminar will be held February 11 at the Nisku Inn in Nisku beginning at 9:30 a.m. The registration fee is $12 per person in advance, and $15 at the door.

Speakers include Dr. Lyle Rode, of the Agriculture Canada research station at Lethbridge, talking about the importance of dairy-quality forage, and super cow/super forage; Alberta Agriculture special crops specialist Ken Lopetinksy discussing how to establish, maintain and obtain high quality forage; Alberta Agriculture dairy nutritionist, Rick Corbett talking on how to best use high quality forage in the herd feeding program; and farmers Henry Krueger and Peter Kuelkin talking about methods of putting up dairy-quality forage.

For more information or to register contact the Alberta Agriculture district office in Leduc at 986-2251.

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Contact: Brian Rhiness
352-1223

January 18, 1988
For immediate release

Four staff appointments announced in Vermilion region

Staff appointments have been announced for four Alberta Agriculture employees in the department's northeast region affecting offices in Vermilion, Vegreville and St. Paul.

The appointments, which include two regional specialists and two district agriculturists, were announced by regional director Ralph Berkan.

The new specialists headquartered in Vermilion are Pat Ramsey as regional livestock production specialist and Jim Unterschultz as regional farm economist.

The DA appointments include Barry Bishop to the office in Vegreville, and Jeff Beckingham to the St. Paul district office.

Ramsey, who served as a district agriculturist in Wetaskiwin six years prior to this appointment, was born and raised on a mixed farm near Lumby ,B.C.

He obtained his bachelor of science degree in agriculture, specializing in animal science from the University of Saskatchewan. He began his career with the department in 1980 as a district agriculturist in training in Peace River.

In his new post, Ramsey will provide resource support and information in areas of livestock production, nutrition, and management to district staff and producers in the region, with a main emphasis on beef cattle and sheep.

Unterschultz, who most recently spent three years as district agriculturist in Vegreville, earned a bachelor of arts degree with honors in economics, and a bachelor of science degree in agriculture (with distinction) from the University of Alberta.

After graduating in 1980 he joined the department as a DA in training in Claresholm and later served as a DA in Wainwright.

In his new capacity, Unterschultz will provide information in areas of farm management, marketing and farm business arrangements to district staff and producers in the region.

(Cont'd)

Four staff appointments announced in Vermilion region (cont'd)

Barry Bishop, who was raised on a farm in southern Saskatchewan, has taken over his new post as one of two district agriculturists in the Vegreville office.

Bishop has an agriculture degree with a major in economics from the University of Saskatchewan. Prior to joining the department he served as an agricultural representative in Saskatchewan for about five years at Hudson Bay, Tisdale and most recently Assiniboia.

Jeff Beckingham, who was raised on a mixed farm in Manitoba will be a DA in training in St. Paul with district agriculturist Terry Holmgren. Beckingham received his agriculture degree with a major in animal science from the University of Manitoba.

Prior to joining the department he worked as a grassland technician, for the Eastern Grassland Society in Beausejour, Manitoba, managing their demonstration and extension activities.

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Contact:

Pat Ramsey	Jim Unterschultz	Barry Bishop	Jeff Beckingham
853-8109	853-8109	632-5400	645-6301

January 18, 1988
For immediate release

Pulse growers plan January harvesting workshop

The Pulse Growers Association of Alberta will be sponsoring a Pulse Harvesting Techniques Workshop January 29 at the Agriplex in Taber.

Starting at 9 a.m., the workshop will look at the latest harvesting techniques in the production of dry beans, peas and lentils.

The workshop will include a good range of harvesting equipment on display with qualified personnel there to discuss the proper use of each piece of equipment for harvesting pulses.

Companies represented include Deutz-Allis (Gleaner), John Deere, Case-International, New Holland, Massey Ferguson (Rotary), Klaas, Lilliston and Kirchner. Discussions on swathing, undercutting and threshing will be included.

The workshop will also include grower presentations on various systems for harvesting beans, peas and lentils; tips for harvesting beans from the Alberta Wheat Pool - Bean Plant; swather modifications for bulky crops by John Keinholtz of Alberta Agriculture's engineering division and a discussion on straight cutting pulses by Blair Roth, special crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture in Lethbridge.

Admission is by membership or a $10 day fee. To pre-register by January 22, or for more information contact Jack Payne or Frank Spanbauer in Taber at 223-7907 or 223-3660, respectively; Blair Roth in Lethbridge at 381-5127; or the Bow Island DA office at 545-2233.

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Contact: Blair Roth
381-5127

January 18, 1988
For immediate release

Publication lists credit alternatives

To help producers compare the alternative sources of credit available for farm business, Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch has updated its publication, "Sources of Farm Business Credit in Alberta".

Doug Barlund, a farm management economist with the branch in Olds, says the publication outlines the credit sources and options that are available to farmers in the province.

The first part of the booklet outlines some key rules for the sound use of credit and provides tips to be considered when dealing with creditors.

"A comparison chart summarizes long-term financing that is available to farmers at banks, credit unions, treasury branches and government agencies," says Barlund. "Readers will note that equity requirements for some loans have increased, most likely due to declining collateral values.

"Many farmers will be interested in the changes to Canadian Wheat Board, Advance Payments for Threshed Grain program. The producers' entitlement for an advance is now determined by the quantity of threshed wheat, oats and barley in storage that is eligible for delivery to the Board.

"Also, landlords are no longer required to participate in a tenant producers' application for an advance. This eliminates the need for a producer who rents grain land, to have his landlord sign the grain advance application."

Barlund says another significant change is that the Farm Improvement Loan Act is scheduled to expire on March 31, 1988 and be renamed the Farm Improvement and Marketing Cooperatives Loans Act. The new act will offer such features as an increased loan amount to $250,000 and a refinancing option that will allow farmers to consolidate their loans.

The booklet also outlines some of the financial management counselling services provided by both the public and private sector.

(Cont'd)

Publication lists credit alternatives (cont'd)

Copies of Sources of Farm Business Credit in Alberta, Agdex 832, can be obtained from Alberta Agriculture district offices; The Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0; or by writing The Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

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Contact: Douglas E. Barlund
556-4245

January 18, 1988
For immediate release

New DA appointed in Eaglesham

Mike Pearson has been named the new district agriculturist in Eaglesham.

Pearson's appointment was announced by John Knapp, Alberta Agriculture's director for the Peace River Region. The new DA is filling a vacancy created by Peter van Everdink who resigned from the department in late 1987 to become a full-time farmer.

After graduating from the University of Alberta in 1982 with a . bachelor of science degree in general agriculture, Pearson worked in herbicide and fertilizer sales, landscaping and farming.

Since 1983 he has been employed by Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife as a land resource agrologist in Fairview. He is an active member and past president of the Peace River branch of Alberta Institute of Agrologists.

Pearson says he is looking forward to working with Alberta Agriculture and being of assistance to the agriculture community in Improvement District of Birch Hills #19.

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Contact: Mike Pearson
359-3828

January 18, 1988
For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

PEOPLE SIDE OF FARMING FEATURED AT SEMINAR

Farm families in central Alberta are urged to participate in a one-day seminar on "The People Side of Farming" in Red Deer in late January. Organized by Alberta Agriculture, the conference will feature several key speakers on topics such as coping with people problems, ways to update management skills and farm management clubs. Among those to address the January 26 session at the Capri Centre are David Irvine, a Lethbridge psychologist, Ted Darling an Alberta Agriculture regional economist in Red Deer, Dennis Dey a farm management consultant with Olds College, Ken and Betty Ditzler of the Joffre Farm and Home Group and representatives of the Brownfield Croppers Farm and Home group. The conference emphasizes that people are the most important part of a farm, and communication and understanding are essential. Cost of the 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. conference is $15 per person or $20 per couple. To register contact an Alberta Agriculture district office in Red Deer, Innisfail or Lacombe.

BASIC MARKETING TO BE DISCUSSED AT LACOMBE

Farmers interested in the basics of livestock and grain marketing should plan to attend an afternoon information session sponsored by Alberta Agriculture in Lacombe, January 21. The Basic Marketing workshop will provide an overview of world agricultural markets, explain how to understand a market report, and discuss marketing alternatives for crops and livestock. The free workshop runs from 1:30 to 3 p.m. at the Alberta Agriculture building in Lacombe. For more information contact district agriculturists Neil Miller or Stuart Tucker, or district home economist Janice McGregor at 782-3301 or 342-2813.

(Cont'd)

1987 CROP YEAR SHORT OF RECORD

Looking at the six major grains produced in Alberta, the 1987 crop was the second largest on record at 16.16 million tonnes, reports Keir Packer, Alberta Agriculture's crop statistician in Edmonton. Production in 1987 fell short of the 18.3 million metric tonnes of 1986/87, but it exceed the 15.5 million metric tonnes produced in 1981/82. Area seeded to the six major grains in 1987/88 was 17,820,000 acres, down slightly from the 18,600,000 acres seeded in 1986/87. While the area in grain slipped slightly, the area in hay production increased by 10 per cent from 3,950,000 acres to 4,350,000 acres. Summerfallow increased marginally to 5,300,000 acres, while special crops increased to 300,000 acres in 1987.

ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT OFFERS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Alberta Environment has developed an environmental education program for the junior high curriculum in Alberta schools. "Water and Agriculture" is the theme of the material which blends with the Land and Life section of the junior high program. Developed by the department's environmental education branch the Water and Agriculture unit is one of eight units in the water literacy series prepared by the SEEDS Foundation. A release from Alberta Environment says the units include both student and teacher manuals, resource lists and related activities and are "a valuable contribution to environmental education resources in Alberta." For more information on the material contact Jim Martin at Alberta Environment in Edmonton at 427-6310 or Bernie Galbraith at Alberta Education at 427-2984.

EVEN MILD CHEESE NEEDS TIME TO AGE

Although it takes only about five hours to turn milk into cheese curds, it may require several months of aging to produce even a mild cheese for the table, says an Alberta Agriculture district home economist. Leona Quantz, DHE in Cardston says as an example one southern Alberta cheese factory ages all its cheese at about 8 degrees Celsius. Mild cheese is aged from one to three months, medium cheese three to seven months and sharp cheese ages for seven months or more. In a recent regional report, Quantz says it takes about five hours from the time pasteurized milk is converted through several steps, to cheese-in-the-press, ready for aging.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News Briefs (cont'd)

PEA PRODUCTION UPDATE PLANNED FOR FEBRUARY

Central Alberta field pea producers are urged to attend a one day seminar in Lacombe in early February for some of the latest information on field pea production. Three Alberta Agriculture specialists will be among those addressing the 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. seminar, February 11 at the Alberta Agriculture building in Lacombe. Bob Park, supervisor of special crops, will discuss pea varieties and management, Neil Miller, district agriculturist will talk about weed control and Fred Boyce, special commodities analyst will provide a market outlook. As well representatives of several contracting companies have been invited to speak. Craig Shaw, director of the Alberta Pulse Growers, in Lacombe will also address the seminar. The seminar is free. No lunch is provided. For more information contact Craig Shaw at 782-6618 or the Alberta Agriculture district office at 782-3301 or 342-2813.

BARLEY GROWERS TO MEET IN SASKATOON

Western Canada barley growers will be meeting in Saskatoon in early February for their 11th annual convention and trade fair. "Flexibility - Key to the Future" is the theme of the February 3 to 5 Western Barley Growers Association convention at the Saskatoon Inn. Along with association business, several speakers are scheduled to address the conference. They include Dr. Bryan Harvey of the University of Saskatchewan with an update on barley breeding research; Gordon Wells of Biotechnica Canada in Calgary, talking about the future impact of biotechnology on agriculture; Sandy Bibby of UFL Foods Inc. of Edmonton discussing value-added products; Art Meyer of Mohawk Oil, Vancouver talking about ethanol production; Otto Lang, of Pioneer Grain in Winnipeg talking about Canadian grain in a changing world; and Gary Haley of Palliser Grain talking about the future of the grain industry. Guest speaker at the February 5 afternoon session is Saskatchewan Premier Grant Devine, who is also the province's agriculture minister.
For more information on the conference or to register contact the association office in Calgary at 291-3630.

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

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AGRI-NEWS

January 25, 1988

CANADIANA
FEB 24 1988

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

January 25, 1988
For immediate release

1987 provincial farm income up compared to 1986

While collectively Alberta farmers ended the year with about 15 per cent more cash in their pockets than they had in 1986, it doesn't mean as individuals everyone made a profit, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

In a year-end report on farm cash receipts and expenses, Bill Schissel says the bottom line shows net income, after depreciation, is estimated at $874 million for 1987, compared to $758 million in 1986.

But Schissel, a specialist with the statistics branch in Edmonton, says in spite of the figures there are many producers, especially those with fairly heavy debt loads, feeling the crunch of poor grain markets.

"In terms of a provincial total, realized net farm income shows a healthy gain," says Schissel. "Income is generally higher than expected, but it must be remembered that while the overall figures are up, there are sectors in agriculture that are having a real struggle."

The year-end figures show total farm cash receipts - revenue from all sources - estimated at $3.926 billion in 1987, up about $145 million from 1986 receipts of $3.781 billion.

On the other side, total farm operating expenses, excluding depreciation, were also up slightly to $2.456 billion for 1987, compared to $2.418 billion the year before.

The figures show agricultural assistance programs were a major factor in boosting farm incomes in 1987.

Farm cash receipts from crop sales were $2.034 billion or more than 10 per cent ahead of 1986 levels. Payments under the Western Grain Stabilization Act (WGSA) amounted to $360 million, while payments under the Special Canadian Grains Program (SCGP) added another $263 million to the pot. There were also payments made to producers under several smaller programs.

(Cont'd)

1987 provincial farm income up compared to 1986 (cont'd)

"In total, these programs contributed about 20 per cent of the value of farm cash receipts in 1987, an increase of about four per cent over 1986," says Schissel.

"Higher receipts from the sale of wheat and canola, increases from the grain stabilization act, and the addition of receipts under the special grains program, more than offset the substantial decrease in receipts from the sale of barley and from reduced crop insurance payouts in 1987."

On the livestock side, although cattle prices were strong in 1987 total cash receipts from the sale of livestock and products were down about 2.5 per cent to about $1.889 billion from 1986. The decrease is attributed to the lack of deficiency or supplementary payments, available in 1986, which were not in affect or did not apply in 1987.

Looking at the $2.456 billion in farm expenses, government programs such as the Alberta Farm Fuel Distribution Allowance and the Crow Benefit Offset Program were estimated to have reduced total expenses by 11 per cent in 1987.

The statistician says in spite of these programs and reductions in some farming costs, overall farm expenses were up about 1.5 per cent over 1986.

"Large increases in the price of fuel and the cost of buying feeder cattle, coupled with marginal increases in taxes, wages to farm labor, repairs to buildings and utilities, more than offset decreases in rental rates, loan interest rates and fertilizer expenses," he said.

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Contact: Bill Schissel
427-4006

January 25, 1988
For immediate release

Two new members named to Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame

Two Albertans who have contributed a combined 60 years of service to provincial youth programs have been inducted into the Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame.

Jackie MacGillivray of Iron River who has served as a club leader and worked for the 4-H organization at the district, regional and provincial levels for 24 years, and Nick Chomik of Wetaskiwin, a retired Alberta Agriculture district agriculturist who for 35 years was involved with 4-H through to the national level, were officially inducted to the hall of fame January 23.

JACKIE MACGILLIVRAY

NICK CHOMIK

The honorees who became the 23rd and 24th members of the hall of fame were inducted at the 1988 Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference banquet in Edmonton. Their framed photos will hang in the Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame gallery at Alberta Agriculture headquarters in Edmonton.

MacGillivray who was born and raised in the Iron River area west of Cold Lake said she was surprised and honored to be named to the 4-H Hall of Fame.

"I never thought I did all that much. I was surprised at being nominated and even more surprised when I was selected one of the 1987 inductees. And I consider it a tremendous honor."

(Cont'd)

Two new members named to Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame (cont'd)

The veteran leader and assistant club leader says she became involved in 4-H before her own children were old enough to join the organization.

"A neighbor had asked me to help in leading an area 4-H garden club and because I enjoyed gardening and enjoyed working with young people that got me started," she said. "Then as our own children got older and became involved in 4-H that just helped further my interest."

The mother of three girls and two boys, says although her family is grown and no longer members of 4-H programs, she continues to be involved in 4-H judging and other projects.

Her career with 4-H included about 20 years as leader or assistant leader of the Iron River Horticulture Club and Iron River Clothing Club (which later became a multi-project club).

Over the years she served as president of the Bonnyville district 4-H council, secretary-treasurer of the North East Regional Council, vice-president and president of the Alberta 4-H Council, a member of the 4-H Foundation of Alberta and a member of several committees and planning groups.

Along with being a dedicated promoter of 4-H programs, MacGillivray was also active in the community serving as a member of the local history book committee, active with the Iron River Centennial Hall committee, president of the Iron River School Association, a member of the community library and recreation boards, and a member of the Willow Prairie Agriculture Society.

MacGillivray and her husband George, continue to operate the family's mixed farm at Iron River.

During his 35 years as a district agriculturist working in Vermilion, Ryley and Vegreville, Nick Chomik was actively involved in the Alberta 4-H program.

Before retiring from the department and moving with his wife, Anne, to Wetaskiwin in 1980, his 4-H involvement extended through the organization from local clubs to the district, regional, provincial and national levels.

Along with his work as a DA, his interest in 4-H was also felt on the home front with the two oldest of his five children active 4-H club members.

(Cont'd)

Two new members named to Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame (cont'd)

Over the years Chomik supervised 26 4-H clubs (17 of which he helped organize). He attended all achievement days and most club meetings and was involved in planning field days, public speaking and judging competitions.

He helped organized two district councils, including the first in the province in Beaver County. At the regional level, Chomik organized leader's courses, speaking competitions, theme displays, and judged at achievement days. On a provincial scale he helped train judging teams for provincial competitions. One of the beef teams became national champions.

At the national level the former DA supervised Alberta delegates at Canadian and U.S. 4-H events.

Along with his strong support of the 4-H movement, Chomik was also active in the community. He served as a member of Chambers of Commerce and Elks Lodge, president of the Vegreville Home and School Association, and a member of the International Order of Oddfellows youth committee. He also worked with many other farm and community groups, societies and associations.

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Contact: Mahlon Weir
4-H Branch, Edmonton
422-4444

January 25, 1988
For immediate release

Researchers, producers to meet at Farming for the Future conference

With today's competitive marketplace making it necessary to keep pace with new trends and technology, both producers and food processors should find a mid-March conference in Calgary useful.

The 1988 Alberta Agriculture Farming for the Future Conference, slated for March 18 at the Marlborough Inn, is designed to address today's demands by introducing producers to the wide range of agricultural research sponsored by the provincial program known as Farming for the Future.

Established in 1977, Farming for the Future has two components: a research program, and an on-farm demonstration program. Research projects consist of development and testing of new practices and technology primarily by professional researchers and scientists, while the on-farm demonstration programs involve the on-site testing and application of agricultural innovations by producers.

Over the 10-year life of Farming for the Future, some 900 projects involving more than 300 scientists and almost 350 farmers have been funded with $41 million allocated from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

With the opening address provided by Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga, the 1988 Calgary conference will feature presentations on a variety of topics.

Included in line-up are talks on farm financial management, swine productivity, canola variety development, fertilizer recommendations for irrigated crops, federal and provincial roles in agricultural research, new processing ideas, feedlot cattle health management, improved feeding practices and several demonstration projects.

(Cont'd)

Researchers, producers to meet at Farming for the Future conference (cont'd)

The work of a several research scientists will be also be featured in display booths, including the following: the University of of Alberta's Dr. D. S. Chanasyk on soil erosion and degradation; Dr. R. S. Sadasavaiah of Agriculture Canada, Lethbridge, on breeding soft white spring wheat; Dr. H. H. Muendel, also of Agriculture Canada, Lethbridge, on safflower and soybean variety development; Dr. S. D. Morgan Jones of Agriculture Canada, Lacombe, on lamb carcass grading; and Dr. Len Bauer, University of Alberta, on computerized record keeping for farm financial management.

Other displays planned are: alternative crops, by Dr. R. Gaudiel of Alberta Agriculture, Brooks; canola breeding, by Dr. Don Woods and Keith Topinka of Agriculture Canada, Beaverlodge and Lethbridge respectively; and intensive crop management, by D. Penny of Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton.

The pre-conference registration deadline is February 29, 1988. For reservations and additional information, contact Sharon Abbott at 427-1956

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Contact: Sharon Abbott
427-1956

January 25, 1988
For immediate release

Contest searches for best hog carcass

Alberta hog producers are urged to get their entries in for the annual competition to find the best hog carcass in the province.

Entries for the barrow carcass competition will be accepted until February 29.

Sponsored by the 1988 Alberta Pork Congress, the barrow competition is a test to determine who can raise the best barrow carcass within a 10 week period.

Art Lange, with Alberta Agriculture's pork industry branch in Edmonton, says entries are weighed on test, and tagged by provincial technicians during the last two weeks in March. At the time of tagging the live barrows cannot weight more than 35 kilograms (77 pounds).

The barrows are brought to the congress June 13, slaughtered at a local plant, and the carcasses are scored.

The top 10 will be sold by auction at the pork congress banquet June 15.

"This can be rewarding for the contributors since the top 10 sold for a record average of $4,365 each in 1987, and the number one carcass sold for a record $5,800," says Lange. "Sale proceeds, minus a 20 per cent commission, are returned to the contributor."

All hog producers are invited to enter. The entry fee is $25. For more information and entry forms, contact the pork congress office in Red Deer at 340-5307 or the pork industry branch in Edmonton at 427-5319.

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Contact: Art Lange
427-5319

January 25, 1988
For immediate release

Alberta florists plan Tokyo trip

At least eight Alberta florists will be among 20 Canadians heading to Japan in mid-March for a first-ever training session organized by Olds College.

The florists from Lethbridge, Edmonton, Fort McMurray and the Peace River region will join businessmen from other Canadian provinces in Tokyo for a two-week crash course in ikebana - the Japanese art of floral design.

This is a first level course in an art that traditionally takes several years to master.

The March 15 to 26 trip to Tokyo was organized by Olds College with the help of Alberta Agriculture. The department through its Tokyo office and the Alberta Agent General's office laid the ground work for a group of Canadian florists to be taught at one of the top schools in the country.

Jacques Descurieux, a consultant with the Calgary extension office of Olds College, says the Tokyo trip is part of the college's effort to build an international reputation.

"We view this trip as the beginning of a tradition," says the consultant. "Through programs such as this the college hopes to strengthen its cultural and educational ties with Japan and other Pacific Rim countries."

Instructed by ikebana masters, the Canadian florists will receive the equivalent of one year's training in an intensive two-week program, says Descurieux.

He says Japanese floral arrangement has evolved into an artistic statement, reflecting Japanese philosophy. Along with flowers, students, following very strict design rules, use other floral and natural materials in their work.

(Cont'd)

Alberta florists plan Tokyo trip (cont'd)

The consultant says although there is little spare time after classes, Canadian florists will have a chance to learn more about Japanese floral culture during visits to a few greenhouses.

He says it may someday be possible for the college to bring one of the Japanese masters of ikebana to Olds to provide further instruction.

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Contact: Jacques Descurieux
237-6677

January 25, 1988
For immediate release

Alberta products well received in B.C. stores

Following successful first-time efforts over the last 18 months, Alberta Agriculture hopes this year to increase the sale of Alberta processed foods through more promotions in British Columbia supermarkets.

With special promotion sales in about 150 food stores topping the $1 million mark in 1986/87, Wilf Walker, trade director with the department's market development division, says plans are being made for a repeat performance.

With millions of dollars in exports now to B.C., the West Coast province is already considered Alberta's largest customer in processed foods, he says. The promotions provide just a further push to help B.C. consumers identify with Alberta-made products.

Although individual Alberta products have been featured in the past, efforts over the last 18 months mark the first time Alberta has staged a wide-selection food promotion in another province, says Walker.

"In the past there have been promotions for Alberta beef or other individual processed foods, but nothing that involved a full range of food products," he says.

"Food manufacturing and retailing is a very competitive industry and each province is of course anxious to promote its own products. Through our Alberta promotions we are trying to promote foods which complement rather than compete with B.C.-made products."

The promotions which involved 92 Safeway stores, 46 Overwaitea stores, and 14 Woodwards food stores included products ranging from Alberta beef, pork and processed meats, to cheese, honey, pasta, perogies, potatoes, french fries, canola oil and cookies.

Staged over three separate weeks, several months apart, each retail chain advertised the Alberta promotion and set up in-store displays featuring Alberta-made products. Total sale of Alberta products during those three weeks was estimated at more than $1 million.

(Cont'd

Alberta products well received in B.C. (cont'd)

All supermarkets were supplied with Alberta Tourism, Edmonton Klondike and Calgary Stampede posters, "Taste of Alberta" recipe brochures, balloons, embroidered Alberta roses and banners. End-aisle displays and product demonstrations were also incorporated.

Walker, who conceived and organized these campaigns, says in the Woodward's promotions last fall Better Buy Alberta banners, buttons and other materials were used for the first time. The Calgary Olympics were also promoted.

A market research firm hired to measure the reaction of B.C. consumers to the Better Buy Alberta logo and slogan found positive results, says Walker.

"The retailers as well as ourselves were anxious to see how B.C. consumers felt," he says. "And their reaction was encouraging. The survey showed there were no negative reactions and B.C. consumers were either neutral or positive to the Better Buy Alberta material."

Walker says negotiations are underway to stage an Alberta promotion in a fourth major B.C. food retailer this spring and then repeat the B.C. campaigns on a semi-annual basis.

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Contact: Wilf Walker
427-4241

January 25, 1988
For immediate release

Fern Richardson named Leduc DHE

A 10-year veteran with Alberta Agriculture's home economics service has been named the new district home economist in the County of Leduc.

Fern Richardson, who began her career with the department as a district home economist (DHE) in High River, assumed her new post January 13. Her appointment was announced by regional home economist Faye Douglas Phillips.

Prior to the Leduc appointment Richardson had served as DHE at the department's Spirit River office in the Peace River region since 1980. After receiving her training in High River she was Foremost DHE in 1979 and 1980.

Born and raised in Winnipeg, Richardson received her bachelor of home economics degree, majoring in nutrition, in 1978, from the University of Manitoba. She began her career with Alberta Agriculture following graduation.

Richardson fills a vacancy created last year by the transfer of Carol Love Rolheiser from the Leduc DHE position to the marketing services division in Edmonton.

The DHE will provide farm clients with services in areas of financial and family resource management, food and nutrition, 4-H and other home economics disciplines.

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Contact: Fern Richardson
986-2251

January 25, 1988
For Immediate release

New publication designed for food processors

Alberta Agriculture has released a new publication of benefit to Alberta's food processing industry.

"The Packaged Goods on Food Processing" is an information kit that will help new food processors chart a course for developing their businesses.

Dianne Hayward, a development officer with the department's agri-food and processing development branch, says the package provides a checklist to help processors target their product and better understand the marketplace and type of product promotion needed.

As well it draws attention to the business skills a good manager will need, lists the type of licences and regulations that apply in product development, and sales and lists sources of assistance available from federal and provincial governments, banks, educational institutions and the food processing industry.

Copies of "The Packaged Goods On Food Processing" are available from Alberta Agriculture, Agri-Food and Processing Development Branch, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

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Contact: Dianne Hayward
427-7325

January 25, 1988
For immediate release

Farmers dominate beef symposium program

Several Alberta cow/calf and feedlot operators will be among those behind the podium next week offering their advice and experience to farmers attending the Alberta Beef Symposium in Edmonton.

Producers speaking to producers is one of the features of this second annual conference which this year will focus on live cattle marketing - options for the future.

Among the farmers speaking at the February 2 and 3 conference at the Coast Terrace Inn will be a cow-calf operator from Pincher Creek, a farmer and feedlot owner from Strathmore, a farmer and cattle buyer from Carstairs, a cow/calf operator from Camrose, and beef producers from Stony Plain.

There is still time to register for the conference by calling any Alberta Agriculture district office, regional livestock specialist or the Alberta Cattle Commission in Calgary.

Speakers will include Rob Mitchell, a cow/calf producer from Pincher Creek who is chairman of the Beef Information Centre Committee of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association. Mitchell is actively involved in the national beef promotion and consumer tracking program.

Ed Thiessen, who operates an extensive farming and custom feeding operation near Strathmore will talk about his 18-year industry experience. He is also an active member of several farm organizations and currently chairman of the Alberta Feed Grain Users Association.

Gary Kelsy, his wife Betty and their two sons, run a farm feedlot and cattle buying operation in the Carstairs area. Kelsy with 30 years experience, will give his marketing advice to producers.

Pat McCarthy, who farms with his father at Camrose, will talk about using the futures market to hedge cattle and grain. He has also used direct sales to the U.S. as an alternative market and the U.S. grading system to help market A3 and A4 cattle. The family corporate farm operates a mixed grain, cow/calf and feedlot operation.

(Cont'd)

Farmers dominate beef symposium program (cont'd)

Brenda Scheideman and husband Glenn, run a cow/calf operation near Stony Plain. Scheideman will discuss her experience from 10 years of operating a feedlot.

Also on the agenda this year are Charles Gracey, vice-president of the Canadian Cattleman's Association; Dr. Mick Price and Mr. Murray Hawkins from the University of Alberta; Al Rogerson from Lakeside Packers in Brooks; Jim Wideman general manager of the Ontario Livestock Exchange; Ron Simms president of Burnt Livestock in Red Deer; Will Irvine, manager of the Calgary Public Livestock Market; David Wright, a cattleman from New South Wales, Australia and Mary Jane Kilpatrick, a consumer consultant with the Beef Information Centre in Calgary.

For more information on the conference contact chairman Doug Walkey in Red Deer at 340-7612; conference secretary Al Dooley in Edmonton at 427-5382 and conference registrar Gordon Mitchell in Calgary at 291-4800.

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Contact: Doug Walkey
340-7612

For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

DAIRY INDUSTRY DUSTS OFF THE CRYSTAL BALL

Alberta dairy producers will have a chance to look at the past, present and future of their industry in early March at the 1988 Alberta Dairy Seminar in Banff. Based on the theme, "Our Industry: Today, Tomorrow and Beyond" the conference will feature talks by several experts on a wide range of topics covering world markets, research and development, feeding and herd health care, livestock reproduction, and farm management. The conference will run March 9 to 11 at the Banff Springs Hotel. For further information contact Val Smyth in Edmonton at 432-2406.

NO MILK SOLD AFTER SHELF-LIFE DATE

An Alberta Agriculture food specialist says extra coding on milk cartons sold in supermarkets does not refer to the shelf-life of the product. Suzanne Tenhold, food and nutrition specialist in Airdrie says some people have assumed that coding such as C-1, C-2 and C-3 represents the number of times the milk has been repasteurized to extend the shelf life. In a recent edition of the Food and Nutrition Matters newsletter, Tenhold clarified the coding. She says the C-1-2-3 numbers refers to different milk production lines and has nothing to do with shelf-life. Consumers should follow the regular shelf-life advisory which is usually found on the top seal of each milk carton. Tenhold says no milk remains on the shelf beyond the pull date on the carton.

MENU NOT FOR WEIGHT WATCHERS

Athletes participating in the Calgary Olympics will consume meals that contain about 5,500 calories a day, according to an Alberta Agriculture newsletter. The latest issue of Food and Nutrition Matters says the food planned for athletes will offer mainly Canadian, Albertan and then Calgarian fare, although foods are included to accommodate a variety of customs. For example, fish and soup are offered at every breakfast to appeal to European appetites.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News Briefs (cont'd)

FARMERS CAN BUILD OWN ROUND BALE FEEDER

Beef producers looking for a handy way to feed large round bales and minimize waste should obtain a copy of plans published in the latest Beef and Bacon newsletter. Adapted from a plan made by Peter Kuelken of Fort Assiniboine, the feeder can be built along a fenceline and filled without opening and closing pen gates. The feeder is filled by pushing the bales in from one end. The feeder, built in eight-foot segments, can be designed to hold from two to five bales. The bales are supported by two rails along the sides and by a centre cone at the bottom. The animals are readily able to clean up the entire bale. A roof can be added to prevent snow buildup and moisture from spoiling hay. For a copy of the plans ask for the December issue of the Beef and Bacon newsletter available from Alberta Agriculture livestock specialists in Barrhead at 674-8248 or Red Deer 340-5336.

CHILD RAISING COSTS ARE STEEP

Children, like expensive sports cars may be fun to have, but they aren't cheap to maintain, according to one recent report. Figures updated to June 1987 estimate it costs nearly $112,000 to raise a child to age 19. The figures, based on a Toronto study and updated for Edmonton, show the major expenses to be food at $27,612, housing at $15,447, clothing at $7,629, recreation and reading at $5,068 and child care expenses at $40,350. Along with lesser expenses such as household operation, personal care, transportation, school supplies and health care, the total bill for 19 years came to $111,973. The report carried in the January issue of the Alberta Agriculture Family Resource Management newsletter noted the figures represent the cost of basics and don't include "extras" such as orthodontic work or music lessons. It says the first child is the most expensive with subsequent costs depending on how much of the clothing and child related equipment can be used again. For parents working outside the home child care costs represent 36 per cent of total child rearing costs. For more information contact any Alberta Agriculture district home economist.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News Briefs (cont'd)

KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING FROM OIL ADDITIVES

With hundreds of chemical additives on the market, designed to improve the quality or performance of engine oil, it's difficult for farmers and other vehicle and equipment operators to know exactly what they are buying. An Alberta Agriculture publication called "Special Additives and Oil Conditioners" helps take some of the mystery out of making a choice and explains what type of products to look for. The publication tells farmers to remember four basic rules about conditioners and additives. 1. An inferior base oil cannot be converted into a premium product simply by using an additive. 2. Some base oils respond well to additives while others do not. 3. Increasing the percentage of a certain additive may improve one property of an oil while at the same time degrading another. 4. The effective use of special additives or conditioners depends entirely on the application in which they are used. For more information or a full copy of the free publication contact any Alberta Agriculture regional engineer or write for "Special Additives and Oil Conditioners" Agdex 763-7, Alberta Agriculture, Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

SWALLOW CONTROL ADVICE

Like many birds, barn and cliff swallows can provide a useful service in helping control insect pests, but they can also be a nuisance with the mess they create around buildings. Protected by an international treaty, birds or nests cannot be removed or destroyed without a special permit. However, a new Alberta Agriculture publication gives some ideas on how to equip buildings to discourage the birds from nesting in certain areas. The four-page publication on "Swallow Control" gives a description and diagrams of measures such as installing mesh under eaves, or hanging a curtain or net from a soffit to discourage the birds from nesting. For a copy of the Swallow Control publication, Agdex 685-7 contact an Alberta Agriculture district office or write Alberta Agriculture, Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

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AGRI-NEWS

CANADIANA
FEB 24 1988

February 1, 1988

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

February 1, 1988
For immediate release

Korean college officials sign agreement with Olds

In their first visit to Western Canada, two South Korean agricultural college officials have signed an historic co-operative agreement with Olds College.

Ki Hyun Ra, president and Dr. Weon Song Dae, a professor at Yonam Jr. College of Livestock and Horticulture in Choong Nam, Korea agreed to a cultural and technological exchange between the two institutions during a week-long tour in late January hosted by Alberta Agriculture and Olds College.

Their visit followed a similar tour to Korea made last June by Olds College president, Dr. Dan Cornish.

The agreement, the first of its kind for both colleges, is expected to lead to a greater exchange of faculty and students, educational material, research publications and instructional information between the two. It was signed in the 75th anniversary year of Olds College and in the 12 anniversary year of Yonam College.

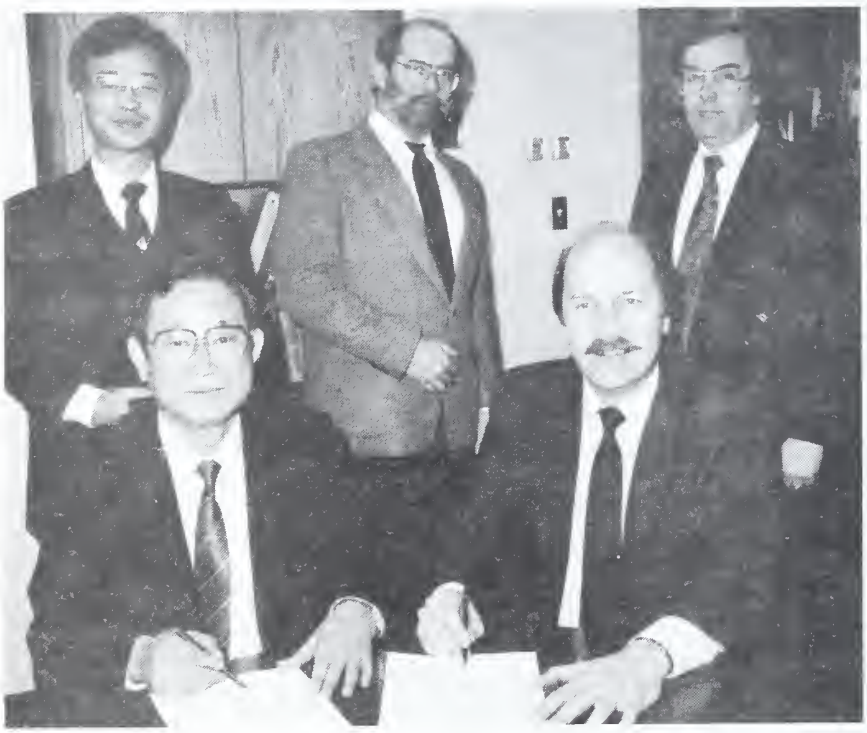
Ab Barrie, an Alberta Agriculture trade director says while the agreement allows for the transfer of technology involving specialities such as livestock genetics and horticulture, it is hoped these efforts will eventually generate further sales of Alberta agriculture products to the Pacific Rim country.

He says it is hoped that by introducing Korean agricultural students to Alberta products through the college program, they will continue to use these commodities in their own private farming operations.

"Through the the technical expertise at Yonam college we are able to have Alberta plant and animal genetics demonstrated in a very practical farming situation," says Barrie. "When the college students complete their programs hopefully they will return to their own farm businesses with a very positive impression of Alberta products.

"We hope that these students and those that follow will be buying Alberta products."

(Cont'd)



LEFT PHOTO
Ki Hyun Ra, president of Yonam College, seated left, and Dr. Dan Cornish, president of Olds College sign co-operative agreement. Looking on, back row from left, Dr. Weon Song Dae, a Yonam Professor, Dr. Ralph Levinson, of Olds College and Ab Barrie, Alberta Agriculture trade director

RIGHT PHOTO
Walter Gilchrist, left, herdsman at the Alberta Hereford Association Bull Test Station at Innisfail talks with Yonam College officials, Ki Hyun Ra and Dr. Weon Song Dae during recent Alberta tour.

LEFT PHOTO
Ki Hyun Ra, president of Yonam College and Dr. Weon Song Dae, a professor of Yonam College in Korea talk with Dr. Ted Mitenko, vice-president of Alta Genetics Inc. of Calgary.

Korean officials sign agreement with Olds (cont'd)

Barrie says progress has already been made with new varieties of rye and oats developed by Alberta Wheat Pool which are now sold in Korea. On the flip-side he says some of the horticultural varieties developed at the Korean college could be introduced in Alberta to expand the greenhouse industry here.

"Yonam has a very advanced program in horticultural work, especially in the area of tissue culture," says Barrie. "As an example they have tremendous expertise in bonsai and developing new varieties of orchids."

Referring to technology transfer Barrie says where the Koreans may be able to teach Alberta about some aspects of horticulture, Olds College on the other hand has experience Yonam lacks in areas such as livestock genetics, embryo transplants and meat processing.

Yonam college accommodates about 600 students on its 56 hectare campus and farm. It offers two-year courses on a wide range of specialties including, dairy, poultry, swine, horticulture, crop production, rabbit farming and fur farming.

Although the Alberta visit was not a buying mission, the college officials did buy their first batch of Alberta livestock semen which will be shipped to the Korean college. Dr. Song Dae said it will be used in research and training programs.

The sale included 40 vials of Angus semen from Independent Breeders at Airdrie and 100 vials of Holstein semen from Western Breeders Inc. at Balzac.

"We have a well established dairy program at the college and we are just developing our beef program," said Dr. Song Dae. "This will be a trial sample to see what results we get and to further our training and research work with the students. If we are pleased with the results it could lead to further sales."

Along with a tour of Olds College, the Koreans also visited a mink ranch, a hereford bull test station, Alberta Agriculture headquarters in Edmonton, the University of Alberta research farm and Lakeland College at Vermilion.

(Cont'd)

Korean college officials sign agreement with Olds (cont'd)

"This is our first trip to Alberta," said Dr. Song Dae. "The five days we have is a very short time to see all aspects of agriculture in Alberta. We have been very impressed with the genetic engineering technology that we have seen, and of course the landscape and the open rolling barley fields have also been impressive."

Speaking on behalf of Mr. Ra, Yonam college president, Dr. Song Dae said: "The aim of our college is to make a strenuous effort for the education of the whole man. We want to cultivate virtues such as honesty and sincerity, while at the same time stressing the importance of acquiring a practical knowledge, rather than only a theoretical one."

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Contact: Ab Barrie
427-4241

February 1, 1988
For immediate release

Alberta Agriculture display expects successful 1988

After catching the eye of thousands of fair-goers in 10 Alberta centres last year, the Alberta Agriculture display is gearing up for another tour of the province in 1988 beginning in March.

Sharon Abbott, program co-ordinator, says public response to the display was "excellent" in 1987 as it travelled to exhibitions and conferences from Calgary to Grande Prairie.

Based on the theme "If you eat you are involved in agriculture", the display graphics and video deals with five areas: the importance of agriculture to the economy; Alberta farm products; feeding the world; challenges in farming; and the government's commitment to agriculture. At the various events, the booth is manned by Alberta Agriculture professional, technical and support staff members.

"The purpose of the Alberta Agriculture display is to educate urban Albertans about the importance of the agriculture industry in their daily lives," says Abbott. "Many people don't realize how diverse the industry is.

"Last year the display appeared at the Calgary Stampede and Edmonton Klondike Days then travelled to Stettler, Grande Prairie, Olds, Ponoka, Spruce Grove and Drayton Valley. The display was brought to the EquiFair at Spruce Meadows because of the department's strong commitment to the horse industry, and we ended the year at Northlands Farmfair in Edmonton."

The co-ordinator says the department's district staff, manning the display, appreciated the opportunity to make contacts with clients and further their community extension efforts.

Contests which offered prizes of two country vacations and the $50 food certificates were also very popular, says Abbott.

(Cont'd)

Alberta Agriculture display expects successful 1988 (cont'd)

A new itinerary which will bring the department's message to other parts of the province is planned for this year. The display will be at Ag Expo in Lethbridge, March 2, Sherwood Park District Trade Fair, April 8 - 10, Brooks Trade Show, April 22 - 24, the Alberta Pork Congress in Red Deer, and the annual conference of National Institute of Farm Safety being held this year in Edmonton, in June.

"We will be at the Calgary Stampede and Edmonton Klondike Days in July," says Abbott. "The August schedule is in the formative stages and any suggestions would be welcome. We will attend the EquiFair again in September and the AgriTrade show in Red Deer in November.

"The invitation is there to come and say 'hello' when we visit your district fair."

For more information on the Alberta Agriculture display contact Sharon Abbott in Edmonton at 427-2127.

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Contact: Sharon Abbott
427-2127

February 1, 1988
For immediate release

Vegetable specialist appointed for northern Alberta

Belinda Choban has been appointed vegetable crop extension specialist at the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in Edmonton.

Choban, who was born and raised near Two Hills, is responsible for Alberta Agriculture's vegetable production program for central and northern Alberta.

One of two specialists in the province, she will be providing extension services and conducting demonstrations and research trials for the commercial vegetable industry from Red Deer north. Paul Ragan, headquartered with the department in Brooks, is responsible for a similar program for southern Alberta.

Choban's appointment was announced by George Grainger, director of the tree nursery and horticulture centre. She replaces Phil Dixon who resigned in late 1987.

The northern specialist obtained her bachelor of science degree in agriculture, specializing in horticulture, from the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

On a seasonal basis, Choban has been doing extension services and trial work with the department's vegetable production program since 1984.

Prior to this she was involved in extension activities with turf grass and amateur horticulture programs at the horticulture centre in northeast Edmonton.

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Contact: Belinda Choban
973-3351

February 1, 1988
For immediate release

Unique sales feature offered at Camrose Bull Congress

Alberta beef breeders wanting to participate in a unique bull show and sale can still book space in the second annual Camrose Bull Congress, February 24 and 25.

Co-sponsored by the Camrose Regional Exhibition and Alberta Farm Life newspaper, the congress combines seminars on beef breeding stock and a related agricultural trade show.

Gordon Porteous, the exhibition's general manager says the trade show aspect allows beef breeders a chance to display their top animals and conduct private treaty sales.

"We feel it's a unique show and sales approach," says Porteous. " A breeder can rent a booth with one of three options. Adajacent to his booth he can have a closed pen to display his top breeding stock; he can have a tie stall to hold two animals; or a tie stall to hold up to four animals."

The manager says the concept allows the beef breeder to have the top animals from his herd right next to his display booth. Breeders will be able to conduct private treaty sales during the congress.

"The bull congress is designed to give purebred beef producers a place to show and merchandise their products," he says. "As well it gives the breed associations an opportunity to meet commercial cattlemen and discuss the value of using bulls of different breeds."

Along with the trade show, several speakers have been booked to address the congress. They include Sid Palmer of EXL Farms talking about animal confirmation; Will Irvine, of the Western Livestock Exchange in Calgary, discussing computer marketing of cattle; Albert Pimm of the Alberta Cattle Commission talking about care and handling of livestock in the 1990s and Dr. Laura Rutter, an Alberta Agricultures reproduction physiologist talking about improved artificial insemination developments.

(Cont'd)

Unique sales feature offered at Camrose Bull Congress (cont'd)

Guest speaker following the February 25 luncheon is Alberta Associate Agriculture Minister, Mrs. Shirley Cripps.

All events are held at the Camrose Agri-Centre.

For more information on the Bull Congress or to book space in the trade show contact Gordon Porteous in Camrose at 672-3640.

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Contact: Gordon Porteous
672-3640

February 1, 1988
For immediate release

Vulcan passport to the future conference

One of the foremost speakers in Canada on "Planning for the Future" will address a one-day conference in Vulcan in early March.

Frank Feather, Canada's leading futurist will be speaking on "Alberta's Future Beyond Agriculture and Energy" during the March 7 day session.

That evening session, Vulcan 2001 - Strategic Options for Change" he will make a dinner presentation.

Both sessions will be held in the Vulcan Cultural Recreational Center, a recently completed combination community hall and gymnasium.

The conference is being co-ordinated by Alberta Agriculture, the County of Vulcan board of education and further education council and the Vulcan Chamber of Commerce.

The day-time sessions, beginning with registration at 9:30 a.m., will also include speakers on the Future of Agriculture and the Future of Education. The keynote address will be given at 10 a.m.. The final speaker will deliver closing remarks at about 3:15 p.m.

The evening session will begin with a social hour at 6 p.m. and dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets for the day workshop are $10 per person, while the evening presentation, which includes a full course meal, is $20 per person.

Tickets are available from the Alberta Agriculture office in Vulcan. To register before the February 22 deadline send a cheque payable to the County of Vulcan No. 2, to Alberta Agriculture, Box 480, Vulcan, Alberta, T0L 2B0.

Conference sponsors include Texaco Canada Ltd., Petro Canada, Alberta Wheat Pool, Cargill Grain Ltd., Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and the Treasury Branch of Vulcan.

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Contact: Dennis Stretch
485-2236

February 1, 1988
For immediate release

Two Hills DA named lab nutritionist

The Alberta Agriculture district agriculturist in Two Hills has accepted a term appointment as a laboratory nutritionist with the department in Edmonton.

Barry Yaremcio, who has been with the Two Hills office since 1985, will be co-ordinating the incoming and outgoing feed samples to the soils and animal nutrition laboratory, and providing results and interpretation of these results to producers.

He will also be working on ration recommendations, nutritional problems, and other concerns in beef and swine areas.

His one-year secondment from the department's field services division was announced by Ron Weisenburger, head of the beef cattle and sheep branch.

While at Two Hills, Yaremcio was involved with all aspects of agriculture, but spent a good portion of his time working in the livestock nutrition and management areas.

"Previous experience gained both on the job and on the family farm enables him to provide both the practical and technical information to producers and agribusiness," says Weisenburger.

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Contact: Barry Yaremcio
427-8905

February 1, 1988
For immediate release

Dates announced for national agricultural computer industry conference

Industry leaders, government representatives and members of the academic community will gather in Edmonton May 9-11 to take part in a national conference on computer management applications in agriculture.

Participants at the "AMSDAV '88", the Agricultural Management Systems - Directions and Visions conference, will hear speakers from across Canada discuss topics ranging from co-operative resource opportunities for research, development and marketing to new technology developments and operating environments for the 1990's.

Organized by Alberta Agriculture, the University of Alberta and Olds College, this one-of-a-kind conference is targeted at software developers, marketers, extension professionals and researchers working in or providing computer-based products to the agriculture and agribusiness market.

Wilson Loree, conference chairman and head of Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch in Olds says the conference will benefit all sectors of the computer software and management industry.

"The conference is designed to provide a forum for software developers, marketers and industry leaders to share thoughts and experiences with a view towards advancing the stature and calibre of the agricultural software industry in Canadian agricultural management," says Loree.

"The meeting will also explore opportunities in the private and public sectors for the co-operative research, development and marketing of computer-based products for agriculture."

Loree says at the same time the conference will provide an opportunity for software entrepreneurs to discuss their ideas and products with established industry leaders and key government people, and build ties with researchers and members of the academic community.

(Cont'd)

Dates announced for national conference (cont'd)

The Agricultural Management Systems - Directions and Visions conference is expected to attract participants and speakers from across Canada and the U.S. Key issues and concerns on the conference agenda include:

- co-operative resource sharing among the public, private and academic sectors.
- new technologies and operating environments for the 1990's.
- new market strategies and business opportunities for the agricultural computer software industry.

Conference sponsors include IBM Canada Ltd., Co-operative Projects, Alberta Agriculture, the University of Alberta, Olds College and members of the agricultural computer software industry.

For more information contact: Paul E. Gervais, conference co-ordinator, Farm Business Management Branch, Alberta Agriculture, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0 or phone 403-556-4240.

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Contact: Paul Gervais
556-4240

February 1, 1988
For immediate release

Swine veterinarian appointed

A former private practitioner from southern Alberta has been named Alberta Agriculture's new swine veterinarian in Edmonton.

Dr. Garry Finell, of Brooks joins the department taking over a position previously held by Dr. Casey Schipper who was appointed beef cattle veterinarian with the department in mid-1987.

Finell's appointment was announced by Dr. M.W. Stone, head of the epidemiology section within the health management branch in Edmonton.

In his new position, Dr. Finell's primary responsibility will be administration of the Alberta Swine Herd Health Program.

In addition, he will be involved in in-depth investigation of disease problems in swine operations throughout the province and will participate in extension programs aimed at swine producers. He will also participate in the initiation, design, conduct and analysis of research trials to evaluate current biologics and/or new products or disease control strategies.

Finell who was born and raised in Saskatchewan, obtained a bachelor of science degree in agriculture from the University of Saskatchewan in 1975, and a doctor of veterinary medicine degree from the same university in 1979.

From May 1979 until September 1983, he operated a veterinary clinic in Outlook, Saskatchewan and then joined a veterinary practice in Brooks, Alberta. He assisted in developing the practice from a one-man to a three-man operation.

During this time, he assisted with the introduction of computerized practice records including billing, recalls and drug inventory control. In addition, he began an analysis of production data for swine herds utilizing the practice, and set-up a herd health program for swine producers in the area.

He also organized a number of meetings for these producers to exchange ideas and information.

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Contact: Dr. Garry Finnell
436-9343

Dr. M.W. Stone
436-9343

February 1, 1988
For immediate release

Land clearing rates now available

Farmers interested in how much it might cost to bring new land into production should obtain a copy of the 1987 survey of custom land clearing and breaking rates just released by the farm business management branch of Alberta Agriculture.

Some 135 operators from across the province responded to the survey, says Garth Nickorick a farm management economist with the department.

The specialist says rates collected in the annual survey show little change from the previous year, and maybe even show some downward movement.

Conducted in November, the survey shows brushing and piling charges range from $70 to $80 per hour from the Calgary area to Montana border for work performed by crawler tractors such as D7, D8 Cats with a dozer blade.

For central Alberta (Red Deer, Barrhead, Cold Lake) rates surveyed indicate $65 to $75 per hour for D7 and $85 to $90 per hour for D8.

Northern Alberta (Peace River - Grande Prairie) rates were $70 to $75 per hour for D7 and $85 to $90 for D8 type machinery for brushing and piling.

In addition to brushing and piling the machinery is charged out at the same rates for most secondary clearing and breaking operations.

First-pass land breaking with a heavy duty disc ranged from $18 to $24 per acre.

Those using rotovators are charging $70 to $85 per hour for the service.

Root raking rates vary from $24 to $27 per acre. Rock picking costs are $35 to $90 per hour.

On a per acre basis, brushing and piling costs are $100 to $120 per acre. The necessary repiling, discing, root and rock picking and cultivating working roughly doubled that cost.

(Cont'd)

Land clearing rates now available (cont'd)

"Dugout construction charges are commonly $60 to $80 per hour for crawler tractors," says Nickorick. "Those operators working with scrapers do charge a higher hourly wage, yet when payment is made based on the volume of dirt moved, the rates are comparable. Rates per volume are $.70 to $1 per cubic yard.

"Rates do vary reflecting economic and land conditions," says the economist. "Such things as terrain, type of bush, distance, size of job, capacity of machinery do affect the actual rate for a particular job."

For more information and a copy of the survey, contact Nickorick, at the Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
556-4247

February 1, 1988
For immediate release

Alberta horse breeders and owners conference a big success

Less than a month after the 1988 event, Alberta Agriculture officials are already gearing up for the 1989 Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners conference.

Les Burwash, supervisor of the department's horse industry branch says the annual conference has proved to be a popular forum for breeders and owners to gain practical production and management information.

More than 200 horse enthusiasts were at the Capri Centre in Red Deer in January for the fifth annual conference, which featured speakers from Canada and the United States.

July Thorson, editorial director of The Lariat, was the keynote speaker. She advised horse owners that they need to establish broad interests in the industry and rid themselves of the B.A. disease. The "Bad Attitude" disease is contagious and dragging the industry down so no one wants to be part of it.

Dr. Gary Potter, speaking on feeding young horses for optimal growth, showed that rate of growth could be altered without detrimental effects if a balanced diet was maintained.

Monty Hinton said that to survive in a depressed economy, it is essential to reduce input costs, look at the bottom line and forget your ego.

Horse barns require ventilation rates that exchange the air at least six times per hour, plus stalls need to be more open to allow air flow and remove stale air and ammonia to maintain healthy horses, according to Dr. Richard Godbee.

Many of the limb disorders are precipitated by conformation which is genetic, said Dr. Rooney.

The economy of the horse industry has bottomed out and it is now showing slow steady, growth according to Ron Palelek and Leo Winters.

"This conference has become one of the best of its type in North America," says Burwash. "Horse enthusiasts who attended the conference gained valuable knowledge to make their horse operations more successful."

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Contact: Les Burwash
297-6650

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

February 1, 1988
For immediate release

Wild rice symposium planned for Lac La Biche

The Alberta Wild Rice Growers Association will be holding their Annual Symposium February 24 at the Lac La Biche Alberta Vocational Centre.

There will be a full day of activities including displays on wild rice production and food products made from wild rice. There will also be presentations on the production, harvesting and marketing of wild rice.

Speakers from Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta will present information on the selection of lakes, soil and water requirements, water depth, seeding rates and general management practices for successful wild rice production. There will also be an update on the present and future markets for wild rice.

A major topic will be the presentation on the results of the modifications made to the head of harvesting equipment to increase the harvesting efficiency of wild rice. Early results indicate the modifications may increase the harvesting efficiency by 25 per cent.

Another major highlight will be the producer panel consisting of two successful growers from Alberta and two long-time experienced growers from Saskatchewan. The panel members will present a short presentation of their individual operations and then answer questions from the audience.

The day begins at 9:30 a.m. with registration. Registration fee of $15 includes lunch and a wild rice cap.

For more information contact Harvey Yoder or David Burdek at Alberta Agriculture district office in Lac La Biche at 623-5218.

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Contact: Harvey Yoder
623-5218

Agri-News Briefs

AGRICULTURE OUTLOOK CONFERENCE SET FOR CALGARY

One of Canada's most highly regarded annual agriculture outlook conferences will be held in Calgary this year in mid-March. Alberta Agriculture's "Accent '88 - Taking Stock" will be held at the Marlborough Inn, March 15 and 16 with speakers from across Canada and the United States. The ninth annual event will provide a conventional outlook for a full range of farm commodities including grains, oilseeds and livestock markets. In addition there will be presentations on the state of the global economy and a more visionary, longer term look at prospects for the agricultural sector. "It has not been a bad year for livestock markets, but we still await a recovery in grain and oilseed prices," says a release from the department's market analysis branch. "While cautious optimism about future grain price trends is emerging, the pork sector is moving towards narrower profit levels. Accent '88 -Taking Stock will provide an up-to-date insight into what we can realistically expect for the balance of 1988 and beyond." The conference is co-sponsored by Alberta Agriculture and the Alberta Agricultural Economics Association. For more information on the conference phone 427-5387 in Edmonton.

SUNFLOWER PRODUCERS HEAD BACK TO SCHOOL

Sunflower producers will spend an afternoon in the classroom later this week as they participate in a "Sunflower School" in Taber organized by Alberta Agriculture. Beginning at 1:30 p.m. February 5, at the Taber Provincial Building, the session will cover sunflower fertility, insects, varieties, weed and disease control, safflower production and marketing and market outlook. The session will involve several Alberta Agriculture specialists and Tom Droog, president of the Alberta Sunflower Seeds company. For more information contact John Payne at the Alberta Agriculture district office in Taber at 223-7907.

(Cont'd)

NORTHERN PULSE GROWERS MEET FEBRUARY 12

Farmers interested in the relatively new area of growing or feeding field peas should plan to attend a one-day seminar in Morinville in mid-February sponsored by the northern branch of the Pulse Growers Association of Alberta. Several speakers have been lined up for the 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. seminar at the Morinville Recreation Centre (Parish Hall), February 12. Alberta Agriculture specialist Sam Jaikaran will talk about feeding peas to hogs, while, Dr. Brian Drew of the University of Saskatchewan will discuss weed control in field peas and other pulse crops, and Dr. Alfred Slinkard of the U of S will give an overview of growing field peas and other pulse crops. Farmers Joe St. Denis, Gordon Frank and Don Gregowich will form a producer panel discussing growing and feeding field peas. Guest speaker for the day is Walter Van De Walle, Member of Parliament for Pembina. For more information or to pre-register contact the Alberta Agriculture district office in Morinville, 939-4351.

WHEAT RECEIPTS UP OVER 1986

Alberta farmers earned an estimated $540 million from the sale of wheat in 1987, up about four per cent from the 1986 level of $518 million. An Alberta Agriculture summary on farm cash receipts for the year says despite the decline in price in 1987, marketings, which are expected to be up by 60 per cent over the previous year, have more than offset the substantial price decline. For the 1986/87 crop year, total Alberta wheat marketings were up 35 per cent over 1985/86 and record volumes were shipped in the last half of 1987. Alberta farmers harvested 7.27 million acres of wheat in 1987, down five per cent from 1986, with production of 5,987,000 tonnes. For more information on the total receipts and expenses report contact Bill Schissel in Edmonton at 427-4006.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News briefs (cont'd)

TREE NURSERY HAS A NEW NUMBER

The Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in northeast Edmonton will be operating with new telephone numbers beginning in early March. The main switchboard number will become 472-6043 while the HORTLINE will change to 472-6049. Continue to use the current numbers until the change goes into affect March 6.

4-H JUDGING COMPETITION PLANNED IN VERMILION

Alberta 4-H clubs are urged to send delegates to a new multi-species judging competition in Vermilion in mid-March. Sponsored by Lakeland College, the March 19 program will be held in conjunction with the college's annual "Little Royal" which is named after the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto. All clubs are invited to send as many individuals or three-member teams, including one junior member, to the event. Members will test their skills in judging seven different livestock and crop classes. Application deadline is February 15. For more information contact the Vermilion regional 4-H office at 853-6532.

TWO WAYS TO GET A HANDLE ON RECORDS

Farm families that haven't kept a good record of cheques and deposits and want to start keeping accurate books can do one of two things, according to an Alberta Agriculture specialist in Fairview. Karin Holst, the family resource management specialist in the January newsletter says there is no magic formula, but it can be done. In one approach bookkeepers can sit down and try and get as close as they can to a reconciled bank statement, then use the corrected balance as their opening balance. They can correct the figure as new transactions or "straggler" cheques come in. Or another approach is to simply open a new bank account and start again. Holst says to leave enough money in the old account to cover cheques, but begin keeping accurate records on the new account. For more information contact Holst in Fairview at 835-2291 or any Alberta Agriculture district office.

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AGRI-NEWS

February 8, 1988

CANADIANA
FEB 24 1988

For immediate release

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Phone: (403) 427-2121

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

February 8, 1988
For immediate release

Two branches to oversee irrigation programs

As part of Alberta Agriculture's ongoing commitment to improve the co-ordination of programs and to increase administrative efficiency, four of the irrigation program delivery branches headquartered in Lethbridge are being consolidated into two new branches.

These organizational changes became effective January 18, 1988. The names of the two branches are the Irrigation Branch, and the Land Evaluation and Reclamation Branch.

In announcing these changes, Brian Colgan, director of the Irrigation and Resource Management Division in Edmonton points out that it is necessary "in these times of fiscal restraint to ensure that administrative structures are as tight as possible and that maximum co-ordination is exerted between program areas.

"By consolidating the activities of four branches into two, together with the ongoing service provided by the Irrigation Secretariat, support to the development and management of the irrigation industry can be sustained while achieving a number of cost saving advantages," says Colgan.

All programs related to the development and management of irrigation systems, whether on-farm or large scale irrigation projects, will be delivered by the irrigation branch headed by Akos Pungor.

Pungor has long standing experience in irrigation first working for the department for seven years at Vauxhall, and then as head of the farm irrigation services branch for the past 21 years.

Programs related to the classification of land, irrigation seepage and salinity control, irrigated land reclamation and irrigation water quality will be delivered by the land evaluation and reclamation branch headed by Brent Paterson.

Paterson has worked on drainage and seepage control in the irrigated areas for the past 14 years. For the past seven years he has been head of the department's drainage branch.

(Cont'd)

Two branches to oversee irrigation programs (cont'd)

Jay Purnell and Kaljo Pohjakas, respectively the former heads of the project planning and the land classification branches have been assigned to work directly with the director of the irrigation and resource management division on a number of special projects until their retirement from Alberta Agriculture this summer.

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Contact: Brian Colgan
422-4596

February 1, 1988
For immediate release

Plant disease specialist appointed in Brooks

A recent graduate from Simon Fraser University (SFU) in Vancouver has been appointed as a plant disease and pest specialist with the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center in Brooks.

David Kaminski, who recently received his master of pest management (MPM) degree has been appointed diagnostician at the Alberta Agriculture facility.

He replaces Marilyn Dykstra who left the position in July 1987 to become director of the University of Guelph's crops laboratory.

As the diagnostician, Kaminski will be responsible for the operation of the regional crops laboratory at Brooks. He has had previous experience as an assistant plant pathologist at the Agriculture Canada research station in Saskatoon, and two terms as a diagnostic technician with the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture in Regina.

The new specialist chose a plant pathology/extension project for his MPM thesis at Simon Fraser. It examined the skill of canola growers using a technique for early detection of sclerotinia stem rot. While at SFU Kaminski also conducted research in nematology.

Born and raised in Saskatoon, he also holds a bachelor of science degree in agriculture, majoring in crop science, from the University of Saskatchewan.

The regional crops laboratory at Brooks provides plant disease, insect and weed problem diagnosis to commercial plant agriculture in southern Alberta. Recommendations on control measures are also made. In addition to operating the laboratory, Kaminski will be editor of the Southern Alberta Crop Protection Newsletter.

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Contact: David Kaminski
362-3391

February 8, 1988
For immediate release

Researchers address conference
Farming for the Future Meets in Calgary, March 18

Several noted researchers will be among the speakers in Calgary in mid-March as Alberta Agriculture hosts the third Farming for The Future research conference.

Experts from Alberta and Ontario will be addressing the March 18 conference at the Marlborough Inn to share their findings, information and news with producers.

Among those speaking to the conference is Dr. Don Woods, of Agriculture Canada, Beaverlodge. He will speak on canola variety development for the Peace River region and the development of winter canola for Southern Alberta.

Woods will explain the history of canola breeding and production, leading up to "why we are where we are."

He will discuss the needs and potential of the canola industry, "and what the feasible goals are -- the value in dollars to producers and crushers." He will also provide some data to highlight the present state of canola breeding research.

Dr. Frank Aherne, a swine specialist with the University of Alberta's department of animal science in Edmonton, will speak on the historical demands for increased productivity faced by the livestock industry and the contemporary trends towards producing leaner meats. He will discuss how these demands can initiate management and feeding practices which, unless implemented carefully, may hinder sow reproductive capability.

He will explain that producers must always remember that part of maximizing production is keeping the birth rate up, and that modern management practices such as increased automation or rationed feeding must be re-evaluated with this in mind.

(Cont'd)

Researchers address conference (cont'd)

Dr. Len Bauer, a professor of rural economy at U of A in Edmonton will speak on profit and survival for today's farm businessman.

"The focus of a farm manager's decisions used to be production," he says. "But these days financial decisions have become a top priority."

He will talk about how farmers must now consider enlarging or reducing their assets such as land, machinery or buildings. Then the farmer must examine what type of financing is best for him -- debt, equity or lease. He will discuss what information is necessary for such decisions, and how research can build this information base.

Along with comments from researchers and farmers, Alberta Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga will also address the conference as the banquet speaker March 18.

The main goal of the conference is to allow researchers to explain their work and its possible applications. However, the schedule also allows time for questions and comments from the floor.

"It is vital to the agriculture and food industry that innovative research continues, and equally critical to get the research results implemented in the field," says Alberta Agriculture deputy minister, Ben McEwen, who is also chairman of the Farming for the Future Council.

"What makes this conference especially worthwhile is that researchers will be discussing their results with the producers and processors who can actually apply them."

The conference format is similar to that of previous conferences in 1984 and 1986. The pre-conference registration deadline is February 29, 1988. For additional information and reservations, contact Sharon Abbott, at 427-1956 in Edmonton.

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Contact: Sharon Abbott
427-1956

February 8, 1988
For immediate release

1987 tillage rates slightly lower

The cost of hiring contractors to plow and cultivate fields in 1987 were slightly lower than 1986 rates, according to survey results released by Alberta Agriculture.

Figures collected by the department's statistics branch in Edmonton show custom charges for tillage operations slightly lower for 1987.

While rates do vary depending on local economic and land conditions, the range quoted by 50 survey participants is slightly lower than 1986 levels, says Garth Nickorick a farm management economist.

Discing cropland was commonly charged at $5 to $7.50 per acre, while discing pasture or hayland added $3 to $4 per acre to the charges.

Cultivation of cropland or summerfallow ranged from $3.50 to $6 per acre. Harrowing costs were $1.75 to $2.50 per acre.

Nickorick notes these rates are for a single pass over the field and do not represent the total cost of a season's work.

For further information or a copy of the survey, contact Nickorick, at the farm business management branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
556-4247

February 8, 1988
For immediate release

Reference book describes farm assistance programs

A description of how to recoup money on farm fuel costs is just one example of the information provided in a booklet designed to familiarize Alberta farmers with government assistance programs.

The 1988 edition of "Assistance Available to Alberta Farmers" has just been published by Alberta Agriculture.

The free 58-page booklet lists more than 90 federal and provincial government programs and services in 18 categories that may be of use to producers.

Subjects covered include programs relating to crops, energy, livestock, poultry, property tax, mobile homes, food processing, agricultural law, seed cleaning and irrigation, to name a few.

Doug Barlund, a farm management economist with the department's farm business management branch in Olds, says the guide provides a thumbnail sketch of the type of programs and services available, the purpose, the terms of who is eligible to apply, and the names and addresses of contact people.

"It's a useful reference book for any Alberta farmer," says Barlund. "Regardless of the enterprise a person is involved in, the book gives a description of programs and services and where to go for more information."

For a copy of the Assistance Available to Alberta Farmers (Agdex 871) contact any Alberta Agriculture district office, or write Alberta Agriculture, Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

Barlund used the following descriptions on farm fuel assistance programs as an example of information provided by the booklet.

Alberta Farm Fuel Distribution Allowance

This provincial program provides a direct reduction of 14¢ per litre for purple gas, purple diesel and purple heating oil used in farming operations.

(Cont'd)

The reduction is composed of a 9¢ per litre price reduction, plus 5¢ per litre exemption from provincial fuel tax.

To receive the 14¢ per litre reduction in fuel costs, the farmer must sign an Alberta Treasury declaration form at the bulk dealer's office. The reduction in fuel cost is then shown directly on the fuel purchase invoice. From the time of completing a declaration form, the farmer can purchase purple fuel for 30 days on the basis of the declaration application until the registered declaration number is supplied to the bulk dealer. Declaration numbers now in effect will expire December 31, 1989. Renewals will be prepared at that time.

There is no other form to complete - no waiting for a refund cheque. This is an instant benefit, right at the bulk dealer's office.

Refund of Federal Excise tax on gasoline

This is a program to refund the federal excise tax on gasoline at the rate of 1.5¢ per litre to commercial businesses, municipalities, farmers, fishermen, taxpayers, agricultural organizations, registered charitable organizations, ministers or clergy, etc. The tax is not levied on diesel fuel, heating fuel, propane or aviation fuel other than aviation gasoline, therefore no refund situation exists for these fuels.

This refund applies to all gasoline (marked or unmarked) used in farming operations, including on-highway business use. Refund claims have to be made on Revenue Canada's Customs and Excise form XE8 (blue) which is available from the post office, or nearest federal excise office.

The booklet goes on to describe the how to make claims and the type of restrictions and deadlines which exist.

Federal fuel tax rebate on gasoline and diesel fuel used off-highway

This program provides a refund of federal fuel tax for both gasoline and diesel fuel used off-highway for farming purposes. The present level of rebate is 7.5¢ per litre of gasoline and diesel fuel. This level of rebate has been in effect since February 19, 1987 and is scheduled to expire December 31, 1989.

The booklet describes two ways to obtain the rebate, time limits involved and other information required.

Contact: Doug Barlund - 556-4245

February 8, 1988
For immediate release

Revised teacher handbooks ready for distribution

The newly revised edition of Alberta Agriculture's educational package known as "Pride in Alberta" is now available for distribution to Alberta elementary schools.

First released in a pilot project to more than 700 schools during the 1986-87 school year, both the text and format of the material have been improved says Betty Gabert, co-ordinator of the department's Agriculture in the Classroom programs.

The educational material itself has been revised to be more useful in the classroom, and instead of the consolidated format of one large binder, three teacher handbooks have now been developed - one for each of the Grades 4, 5 and 6 levels.

The object of the Agriculture in the Classroom package is to develop agricultural awareness for Alberta youth. Working at these three grade levels, the material uses several techniques to review the agriculture industry as a whole and look at commodity production, processing and marketing.

"These aren't dry old lectures, but creative, active lessons that give the children hands-on learning experience," says Gabert. "The teachers receive a complete curriculum-compatible handbook that provides ideas and resource materials needed for each lesson. And along with learning about agriculture, the students will also be developing their social studies, science and language arts skills."

The educational material covers the past, present and future of agriculture. As an example, the Grade 4s have a chapter on being a homesteader which asks them to think like a turn-of-the century homesteader, listing the possessions of a homesteader, planning a move and starting a new settlement.

(Cont'd)

Revised teacher handbooks ready for distribution (cont'd)

The Grade 5 handbook has a section dealing with energy conversion. In this chapter students are involved in projects which help them understand how the sun is used to grow plants, how plants are turned into meat and dairy products, and how food is used to produce protein and energy for people to grow and develop.

The Grade 6 handbook has one chapter that looks at agricultural careers. While it is not designed to recruit new farmers and agribusiness people, it is intended to make students think about the different careers available in agriculture and the role and function of each job. The chapter involves a game where different clues are given and students have to guess the occupation.

The teacher handbooks, which have been reviewed by an agriculture education steering committee of Alberta Agriculture, a review committee of Alberta Education, and teachers, are available free from Alberta Agriculture upon request.

Gabert says teachers interested in the material can also arrange to have some in-service training in using the handbooks during one of their professional development days.

For a copy of the handbooks or more information contact Betty Gabert at Alberta Agriculture, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6, or phone 427-2402.

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Contact: Betty Gabert
427-2402

February 1, 1988
For immediate release

New market directory available to food processors

New and established Alberta food processors will be interested in a new marketplace reference publication available from Alberta Agriculture.

The guide is designed for both the new businessman looking for information on the market situation, or the established processor thinking about launching a new food or beverage product.

"AIM: Acquiring Information on the Marketplace" was developed jointly by staff of the market development division and the library services branch of Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton.

"Acquiring information on the marketplace is a basic part of the marketing research process and marketing research in turn is fundamental to the development of a new product or service," says marketing officer, Brenda Lennox.

"Sound marketing research will help identify the 'need' for a given product or lead to a concept from which a new product evolves. Any new product must be market focused to ensure success. This involves extensive market information collection, preliminary market assessment, detailed market research, prototype rials and test marketing.

"Ultimately, market research will tell marketing managers how to segment the marketplace and how to differentiate their product from the competition. An investment of time and some money in marketing research in the early stages of product development may help avoid problems down the line. 'AIM' is designed to assist the market researcher in this process."

The publication is divided into four sections:

- Market research bibliography
- Directory of consulting firms and agencies
- Selected sources used by the food industry
- Audio-visual materials

(Cont'd)

New market directory available to food processors (cont'd)

"The bibliography is a selective list of publications and services available to the market researchers," says Rob Bateman, head of the department's library services branch. "Because this is where marketing researchers should begin the process, this section is placed first.

"The second section is a directory of consulting firms and agencies in Alberta who can help an entrepreneur conduct marketing research. Consultants can assist with product-specific research after the initial literature survey is complete."

The section entitled "Selected Sources Used by the Food Industry" lists companies and organizations that sell or provide market data as well as publications and other services which provide demographic information and estimates of per capita consumption for various goods and services.

The final section of "AIM" is a list of Audio-Visual Materials, he says. The video series includes 26 tapes, each covering a different element of marketing.

"'AIM' will be of assistance in preparing marketing plans and is complemented by two other publications produced by Alberta Agriculture," says Lennox. "'Marketing Food in Alberta - An Access Directory' and 'The Packaged Goods on Food Processing for New Small Businesses in Alberta' are also of value to the food processing industry."

For a copy of "AIM" or further information on Alberta Agriculture's marketing services, write the Market Development Division, Alberta Agriculture, 3rd Floor, J.G. O'Donoghue Building, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6 or call (403) 427-4241.

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Contact: Brenda Lennox
427-4241

Rob Bateman
427-2104

February 8, 1988
For immediate release

Register early for tree pruning course

Anyone interested in learning the technique of tree pruning and tree care should register soon for an annual course offered in early March by Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton.

Registration for the two-day Tree Pruning Course, March 1 and 2, is limited to 30 people and should be submitted by February 26.

Offered at the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in northeast Edmonton, the course is designed for people whose jobs involve trees, but the sessions are open to anyone interested in tree maintenance and beautification.

Brendan Casement, a tree specialist with the department, says the course covers specific pruning techniques recommended for shade, ornamental and fruit trees, and is arranged so participants have opportunity to practise what they learn in the classroom.

The course, which costs $10 will also cover insect and disease control as it relates to pruning; tree structure and growth; and tree and shrub hardiness of those varieties recommended in Alberta.

Some 125 people attended three similar courses offered in 1987. Several pre-registrations have already been received for the 1988 course.

Registration forms are available from the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre, R.R. #6, Edmonton, Alberta, T5B 4K3.

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Contact: Brendan Casement
973-3351

February 8, 1988
For immediate release

January temperatures generally above normal

Continuing a trend started last fall, the weather seems to be running a month behind normal with January temperatures pretty close to the long-term average for December, says a climatologist with Alberta Agriculture.

Peter Dzikowski, with the conservation and development branch in Edmonton, says January temperatures were about four degrees Celsius (C) warmer than normal.

January started out with temperatures getting colder during the first 10 days, but by the third week made an about-face with daytime maximum temperatures above freezing throughout Alberta.

"The last few days of the month brought a sudden drop of temperatures to more seasonal values," says Dzikowski. "There is concern about the effect this had on overwintering crops, trees and shrubs that might have lost some winter hardiness during the mild spell. There was more than a 40°C spread between the warmest and coldest temperature reported during January at most stations in Alberta."

Precipitation amounts were very low in central and southern Alberta, but slightly above normal in northern Alberta. Rocky Mountain House reported 2.6 millimetres (mm) of precipitation, only 10 per cent of the normal for January.

Most central and southern locations reported 6 to 8 mm, about 25 per cent of normal. Northern locations reported 30 to 40 mm of precipitation, about 10 to 20 per cent above normal.

"Overall, January was warmer and drier than normal, except in the northern part of Alberta which reported above normal precipitation," says the specialist.

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Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

Agri-News Briefs

CROP INSURANCE PAYOUTS DOWN IN 1987

Total payouts to Alberta farmers under the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance program in 1987 are expected to be about $126 million down about 19 per cent from 1986 levels, according to an Alberta Agriculture report. The report on farm cash receipts and expenses for last year, says crop insurance was one of several programs which contributed to total receipts of $3.924 billion. Funds provided to Alberta farmers through the Western Grain Stabilization Act amounted to $360 million in 1987. (Alberta's share was about 26 per cent of the total payment of $1.398 billion for the Canadian Wheat Board designated area.) Under the Special Canadian Grains Program for 1987 Alberta producers are expected to receive about $261 million. Total direct program payments for 1987 are expected to amount to $768 million or about 38 per cent of total crop receipts. The report notes that although the program payments are substantial they do not fully compensate for the decline in crop receipts since 1981. For more information on the report contact Bill Schissel at the statistics branch in Edmonton at 427-4006.

PEA PRODUCTION UPDATE PLANNED FOR FEBRUARY

Final reminder to Central Alberta field pea producers to attend a one-day seminar in Lacombe February 11 to hear the latest information on field pea production. Three Alberta Agriculture specialists will be among those addressing the 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. seminar, in the Alberta Agriculture building in Lacombe. As well Craig Shaw, director of the Alberta Pulse Growers, in Lacombe will also address the free seminar. For more information contact Craig Shaw at 782-6618 or the Alberta Agriculture district office at 782-3301 or 342-2813.

(Cont'd)

POULTRY WELFARE ON CONFERENCE AGENDA

The animal welfare, free trade, federal tax reforms and poultry health issues will be among the topics discussed in Red Deer in late February at the 37th annual Alberta Poultry Industry Conference. Several speakers have been linec up for the February 29 to March 2 conference at the Capri Centre. The conference involves several producer groups and marketing boards including the Alberta Turkey Growers Marketing Board, the Alberta Egg and Fowl Marketing Board, the Hatching Egg Producers, the Alberta Poultry Hatchery Association, the Alberta Chicken Producers Marketing Board, and the Alberta Commercial Egg Producers Association. For more information on the conference contact Gerry Patsula in Edmonton at 427-5089.

CALGARY BULL SALE MARCH 8

The 88th annual Calgary Bull Sale will be held March 6 to 8 at the Agriculture Building of Stampede Park in Calgary. Sponsored by the Alberta Cattle Breeders Association there will be shows and sales of various beef cattle breeds including Hereford, Charolais, Simmental, Angus and Limousin. There will also be a hay and seed fair. For more information on the event which gets underway each day with breakfast at 7 a.m. and the shows starting at 10 a.m., phone 261-0339 in Calgary.

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR OUTSTANDING YOUNG FARMER

Organizers are again looking for Alberta nominations for the annual national Outstanding Young Farmer Program. Organized by the Canada Jaycees and sponsored by Hoechst Canada Inc. the program spotlights young men and women, who through their own resources and innovations, have achieved success and leadership within the farming industry. Eligible nominees must be between 18 and 39 years of age, and must operate a farm from which two-thirds of their income is derived. For more information or to make a nomination contact any Hoechst representative or contact the company office at 295 Henderson Drive, Regina, Saskatchewan, S4N 6C2 or phone 1-800-667-5959. Nomination deadline is February 28, 1988.

Cont'd)

Agri-News Briefs (cont'd)

MARCH 1 IS DEADLINE FOR 4-H COMPETITION

Alberta 4-H clubs planning to send representatives to a new multi-species judging competition in Vermilion have until March 1 to register. Sponsored by Lakeland College, the actual competition will be held March 19 during the college's Little Royal Fair. All clubs are invited to send as many individuals or three-member teams, including one junior member, to the event. For more information contact the Vermilion regional 4-H office at 853-8109, or event organizer Charlene Schultz at 853-6532.

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HL / 691

AGRI-NEWS

February 15, 1988

CANADIANA
MAR 1 1 1988

For immediate release

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Release from the Alberta Products Marketing Council

Re: Potato Marketing Board Plebiscite

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

February 15, 1988
For immediate release

First round of Seiyu exchange complete

A staff exchange program between Alberta Agriculture and a major Japanese retailer has completed its first full cycle with new marketing specialists now on both sides of the Pacific.

In a recent ceremony at Alberta Agriculture headquarters in Edmonton, the department bid farewell to the first Seiyu Store representative in Alberta and welcomed his successor.

A similar ceremony took place in Japan in 1987 with a new Alberta Agriculture representative taking over duties with the Japanese department store chain.

In Edmonton, Deputy Minister Ben McEwen presented a plaque and expressed his appreciation to Kenji Makise, a Seiyu employee who had made Alberta his home for the past two years.

At the same time the deputy minister welcomed Hiroyoshi Shiragami, a chief merchandiser with Seiyu's international division, who has now begun his one-year stint in the province.

The exchange was created in 1985 to be of mutual benefit to both parties. For Alberta Agriculture the exchange provides an opportunity for one of its marketing specialists to learn the Japanese system of retailing, and encourage trade of Alberta food products.

For the Seiyu company, the exchange provides its representative an opportunity to learn the Canadian marketing system and become familiar with the range and flexibility of products produced in Alberta which could be adapted to the Japanese consumer market.

A department marketing officer, Jeff Kucharski, was selected for the first two-year stint with the Seiyu stores in Tokyo. Seiyu in turn selected Makise to take on the first two-year term here.

Kucharski, who completed his part of the exchange in 1987 has returned to Alberta to work as a department trade director with primary responsiblities in Japan. He has been replaced in Tokyo by marketing officer Mike Leslie.

(Cont'd)

First round of Seiyu exchange complete (cont'd)

Seiyu representative Kenji Makise, left, accepts a plaque and appreciation from Deputy Minister Ben McEwen

"Alberta Agriculture was very pleased to have an individual such as Kenji Makise working with us for the past two years," says the deputy minister. "His experience and knowledge has been of value to our staff and to Alberta's food processing industry. Hopefully we have been able to broaden his knowledge and understanding. We wish him well in the future."

The 270 Seiyu Stores are among the top food retailers in Japan and the department store chain is part of that country's largest retail group.

Dennis Glover, executive director of the department's market development branch, says the exchange has already shown benefits for Alberta food processors. The program generated nearly $2 million in export sales from Alberta in 1987 and increased exports are expected this year.

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Contact: Dennis Glover
427-4241

February 15, 1988
For immediate release

Special crops continue dramatic increase

Following some dramatic increases in acreage in 1987, Alberta's special crops industry is expected to expand by another 33 per cent in 1988 surpassing the 400,000-acre mark.

Although acreages were up, lower yields and marginally lower prices for many of the crops reduced the estimated value of production to $85 million. That compares with a 1986 crop value of about $90 million.

Big acreage gains expected in 1988 include a 15 per cent increase in mustard, a 50 per cent increase in lentils, and a 100 per cent increase in field peas.

Keir Packer, a crop statistician with Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton, says these are conservative estimates based on a recent survey of special crops producers. More than 900 of the 2,494 farmers surveyed responded to the annual survey.

Looking at last year, Packer says there was a 32 per cent increase in special crop area in 1987. The total area under special crops (excluding forage seeds, other than alfalfa) increased from 230,000 acres in 1986 to 305,000 acres in 1987. Total value of special crops produced in 1987 is estimated at $85 million.

Packer says if the 1986 estimate of Alberta's forage seed area of 200,000 acres is included, total acreage devoted to special crops exceeds the 500,000-acre mark.

"The 1987 increase was the most dramatic increase special crops has seen in the past six years," says Packer. "Specialty crop prices were very attractive relative to depresssed cereal grain prices in the spring of 1987. The availability of profitable contracts for peas, beans and lentils led to major increases in acreage for these crops. Soil moisture conditions were also excellent in May 1987 offering further incentive to expand the area."

The major crops produced last year included mustard, dry peas, dry beans, sugar beets, potatoes and lentils.

(Cont'd)

Special crops continue dramatic increase (cont'd)

Packer says the root crops acreage has remained stable, while the acreage of peas, beans and lentils has made the most gains. Dry pea acreage increased 340 per cent last year, while the bean area increased 89 per cent, and the lentil area was up 245 per cent.

"The only specialty crop to show a significant reduction in area was mustard, which lost 20 per cent of its 1986 base," says Packer. "In 1987 55,000 acres were seeded, down from 69,300 acres in 1986. However planting intentions show mustard is expected to recover some of that acreage in 1988."

Mustard yield dropped slightly in 1987 from 1,032 pounds per acre in 1986 to 982 pounds in 1987. Total production of the three mustard varieties - oriental mustard, yellow mustard and brown mustard - was 24,500 tonnes down from 32,000 tonnes in 1986.

Field peas, the most widely grown specialty crop, showed the most dramatic increase in area of any crop, says the statistician. With contract prices as high as $4.50 per bushel in the spring of 1987 the incentive to try pea production was high.

The area in peas increased from 14,600 acres in 1986 to 65,000 acres in 1987. Less than ideal growing conditions, and in some cases lack of experience were blamed for reduced yields last year. Yields per acre dropped from about 2,300 in 1986 to 1,614 pounds in 1987.

Dry beans were another crop showing a major increase in area in 1987, says Packer. The acreage increased from 11,600 acres in 1986 to 22,000 acres in 1987. The major factor for the increase was expansion of the bean processing plant at Bow Island.

Lentils showed substantial growth in area jumping from 12,200 acres in 1986 to 30,000 acres in 1987. Lentil prices at about 17 cents a pound in the spring of 1987 were considered good. Yield of lentils improved in 1987 moving up from 848 pounds in 1986 to 983 pounds per acre.

(Cont'd)

Special crops continue dramatic increase (cont'd)

Special crops harvested as grains increased from 108,000 tonnes in 1986 to 132,000 tonnes in 1987. Sugar beets and potatoes remained major contributors to Alberta's special crop production. Sugar beet acreage remained steady at about 30,000 acres, while potatoes increased from 22,450 acres to 23,500 acres.

For more information or a complete copy of the 1987 Special Crop Survey contact Keir Packer, Alberta Agriculture, Statistics Branch, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6 or phone 427-4011.

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Contact: Keir Packer
427-4011

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

February 15, 1988
For immediate release

Electronic marketing draws beef producers' interest

Beef industry officials in the past have generally agreed that buying cattle sight unseen is probably not a good policy, but thanks to computers attitudes and trends are changing.

Buying slaughter cattle that are still on pasture, or out in the feedlot without even leaving the packing plant office is one of the newest marketing concepts ahead for Alberta's beef industry, an Edmonton conference has heard.

Electronic marketing isn't totally new in the world. Eastern Canada has been using the concept for several years, marketing some 105,000 head of slaughter cattle through the system, last year.

And Australia has developed the first national system which allows buyers from across the country to make bids on three separate auctions each with 40 lots of livestock or more at one time.

The system known as CALM allows a person bidding 2,000 miles away exactly the same chance to place a bid on the livestock being sold as another buyer living across the street from the feedlot.

In Alberta, Will Irvine, manager of the Calgary Public Livestock Market, told the recent Alberta Beef Symposium that electronic marketing is just making a start in Western Canada.

He says Western Livestock Exchange operates a network of auctions tied electronically to several Alberta packing plants. Sales are conducted over the phone as buyers view a full description of the cattle on the computer terminal and place bids accordingly. He says the system provides significant benefits for both buyers and sellers.

Irvine was one of a dozen speakers who addressed the second beef symposium on "Live Cattle Marketing - Options for the Future" in Edmonton. More than 260 farmers, feedlot owners, marketing and industry specialists attended the two-day session sponsored by Alberta Agriculture and the Alberta Cattle Commission.

(Cont'd)

Electronic marketing draws beef producers' interest (cont'd)

Doug Walkey, an Alberta Agriculture regional marketing specialist in Red Deer and symposium chairman, says he was pleased with the response to the conference.

"The symposium went very well," he said. "There were cow-calf producers, feedlot owners and buyers from every region of the province. While comments indicated that all speakers were well received, there was obvious interest in new trends in marketing - electronic marketing.

"Hearing from Will Irvine how the system is developing in Western Canada and from David Wright, a cattleman from New South Wales, Australia, on how the national system has evolved there, my personal hopes are that we can develop a system in Canada that will eventually mirror Australia's."

Walkey says other key comments made at the symposium came from Ed Thiesen, a feedlot owner at Strathmore and, Brenda Scheideman, a cow-calf producer and feedlot owner from Stony Plain.

Thiesen made the point that the overall objective of the industry is to market beef and not cattle. He says the cow-calf operator produces cattle, which are sold to the feedlot operators who in turn sell beef to the packing plants, who in turn produce meat products for the consumer.

Thiesen says it is the responsibility of the cow-calf producer to make the genetic improvements in his cattle that will ultimately result in the type of beef the packer desires. It is important for consumer preferences to be communicated to the cow-calf operator.

Scheideman in her comments said if producers adopted more progressive marketing techniques they could realize greater return for their product.

"Market management begins with the decisions made at home," she told the symposium. "As the owner of the livestock you can exercise several options to influence your net return. An attractive product possesses the qualities most desired by the market-place.

(Cont'd)

Electronic marketing draws beef producers' interest (cont'd)

"Dehorning, castration, immunization, and nutritional management all contribute to an attractive product. Tailor your product to the market, explore your potential, know your costs. Then you are ready to make a management decision best suited to your situation."

Walkey said with the success of the beef production symposium in 1987 and the beef marketing symposium in 1988, he expects further sessions will be organized.

He thanked the sponsors that supported the cost of the symposium and praised the efforts of Gordon Mitchell of the Alberta Cattle Commission for his assistance in organizing the event.

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Contact: Doug Walkey
340-7612

February 15, 1988
For immediate release

Crop rotation shortcuts can be expensive

Low grain prices in 1988 are forcing farmers to look for alternative cash crops and perhaps ignore good agronomic practices, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Bill Chapman, a regional crop production specialist in Barrhead, says regardless of how good prices might get for some crops, farmers using the same land for the same crop two or more years in a row are just asking for disease problems and yield losses.

Chapman says with some fungicide treatment costing $20 an acre and up, taking crop rotation shortcuts can be uneconomical.

"Some farmers are looking at growing peas, while others are increasing canola acres, or growing it for the first time," he says. "In late January, canola prices ranged from $5.76 to $6.05 based on next November Futures. Returns per acre in comparison to barley or wheat are significantly better than break even.

"But before producers seed the whole farm to canola (or any crop) they should consider the implications of disease problems which determine crop rotation. Some growers who have planted canola on canola stubble, or canola on cereal, or summerfallow that was previously canola have a greater incidence of seedling blight and damping off in the spring."

While these problems can often be eliminated with dual-purpose seed treatment, other diseases are more costly.

Chapman says farmers should realize that with disease carryover of sclerotinia and alternaria black spot on canola trash, canola yields can be seriously reduced.

"In the past the recommended rotation was canola every four years, but with today's economic situation every three years is acceptable provided the disease host or carrier weeds like stinkweek or wild mustard are controlled between canola crops," he says.

"Peas and other cruciferous - mustard family crops are also hosts for these diseases so the crop rotation should be adjusted when growing canola."

(Cont'd)

Crop rotation shortcuts can be expensive (cont'd)

The specialist says, as an example, drier weather conditions in Alberta's northwest agriculture region during July reduced the infestation levels of sclerotinia. Sclerotinia stem rot has been a minor problem for the last six to eight years.

However wetter weather in August promoted higher levels of alternaria field infestations. Alternaria black spot is a relatively new disease which attacks Campestris (Polish Canola) types.

Alternaria spores which can be both seed and air borne, can infect canola crops in the seedling to podding stages of growth. Chapman says high levels of pod infection during wet weather in August can cause shattering and yield losses up to 20 to 30 per cent.

The disease is most noticeable as black spots on the pods. These spots release spores which look like a dark colored dust all over the swather.

"Fungicides are available for these two diseases, but at a cost of $20 to $24 per acre in 1987," says the specialist. "Before spraying, farmers should consult Alberta Agriculture's Disease Forecasting checklist (Agdex 149/632-4) to ensure the levels are economical to treat. By following a sound crop rotation program the risk of these disease problems can be greatly reduced."

For more information on crop rotations or crop diseases contact any Alberta Agriculture district agriculturist or regional crop specialist.

For a copy of the publication write Alberta Agriculture's, Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

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Contact: Bill Chapman
674-8258

EDITOR'S NOTE

On December 16, 1987, Michael Wilson presented a Notice of Ways and Means Motion to amend the Income Tax Act, which contained many of his tax reform proposals of June 18, 1987.

For farmers, the highlight of Wilson's amendments is the retraction of the modified accrual accounting system. Extensive lobbying on the part of farm groups and individuals appears to have had the intended effect and the government has indicated that it no longer intends to proceed with the modified accrual basis accounting for farmers as set out in the White Paper proposals.

The government has instead decided to consult with farm groups on a proposal under which all farmers may continue to account on a cash basis, with special measures that will apply where a cash basis loss is generated.

Although the government has abandoned the modified accrual basis accounting proposal, it has re-introduced a proposal for discussion whereby, losses on the cash basis will only be deductible if they exceed the cost or value of inventory on hand at the end of a fiscal year.

Through this approach, the federal government is acknowledging their original objective to limit cash base losses through inventory accumulation without the requirement that the entire agricultural industry file on a modified accrual accounting system.

In order to explain this proposal and other new rules, Merle Good, a farm management economist with Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch in Olds, has prepared three articles.

The first article deals with the $500,000 capital gains exemption, the second article with farm income and losses and the third with the various tax measures affecting farmers.

(Cont'd)

Tax Reform II - The Sequel
By Merle Good

(Part 1 of a three-part series)

THE $500,000 LIFETIME CAPITAL GAINS EXEMPTION

The recent announcement by the Federal Finance Minister, Michael Wilson, that farmers and small business corporations will retain the $500,000 lifetime capital gains exemption was welcomed by the farm community.

In fact, the capital gains exemption has been substantially strengthened. Essentially, two major changes are proposed to the tax treatment of capital gains. These are as follows:

a) The definition of "qualified farm property" will be expanded
to include property owned by a family farm partnership of the individual and his spouse and property used by a parent of an individual.
b) The person using the property must be actively engaged, on a regular and continuous basis, in the business of farming.

FARM PROPERTY ACQUIRED PRIOR TO JUNE 17, 1987.

Up until the time of the Ways and Means Motion, for qualified farm property to be eligible for the $500,000 capital gains exemption, the property must have been farmed in the year of disposition or farmed for at least five years by any of the following: the taxpayer; the taxpayer's spouse; child; or their family farm partnership or family farm corporation.

It is important to recognize there are two components that determine whether property qualifies for the exemption or not. These are: who owns the property and who used the property. As a result of the Ways and Means Motion, there have been amendments to these conditions that will result in a broader application of the exemption.

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The definition of qualified property is to be amended to include property that is OWNED by a family farm partnership of the individual or spouse of the individual and to include property that was USED by a parent of the individual.

These two technical points are of importance, as a partnership can now sell property and have the capital gains exemption apply. On the second point, a child could rent land back to a parent who is presently engaged in the business of farming or has used the child's land in the business of farming for at least five years.

In this situation, a child's land would qualify for the $500,000 capital gains exemption. Note however, that a corporation is still not eligible to claim the capital gains exemption on PROPERTY it wishes to sell, but rather the SHARES of the corporation may be eligible.

FARM PROPERTY ACQUIRED AFTER JUNE 17, 1987

(a) Ownership rules

In order to qualify for the exemption for property acquired after June 17, 1987, the rules relating to the ownership of the property are the same as for property acquired before June 17, 1987.

These rules require the property must have been owned by the taxpayer, spouse of the taxpayer, or family farm partnership of the taxpayer or the taxpayer's spouse. However, there is an additional requirement that property acquired after June 17, 1987 be held for at least 24 months immediately before disposition to be eligible for the exemption. In addition, the property would qualify if it had been owned during that time by a child or parent of the taxpayer.

This provision permits situations such as a widow or a child acquiring farmland to qualify for the exemption, provided the property was owned in the prior 24 months period by the spouse or the parent as the case may be.

(Cont'd)

(b) Business Use Rules

Not only must the property be owned for at least 24 months, but while so owned, in at least two calendar years, the farming gross revenue of the individual, spouse, child or parent of the individual by whom the property was used, must exceed the net income from all other sources in the year for that person. Furthermore, that person must be actively engaged on a regular and continuous basis in the business of farming.

Alternatively, the property could be used by a family farm corporation or partnership of the individual, of the spouse, child or parent of the individual in carrying on the business of farming, where such a person was actively engaged on a regular and continuous basis. In this situation there is no requirement of gross revenue exceeding net income from other sources, but only that the property be used for at least a 24 month period.

As a result of the holding and gross revenue requirements, it appears the government is taking steps to eliminate the use of the $500,000 capital gains exemption as a quick flip tax shelter for real estate investment.

In order to summarize these rules, the following table entitled The $500,000 Exemption Reference Guide, is provided.

(Cont'd)

The $500,000 exemption reference guide

Owned Prior to June 17, 1987	Acquired After June 17, 1987
Property	
- Real property (land & buildings)	-
- partnership interest, corporate shares of a family farm partnership or corporation	- Same
- machinery and all other capital property limited to $100,000 exemption.	-
	-
Property Ownership	
- owned by taxpayer, spouse or family farm partnership of the taxpayer or spouse.	- Same
	- property must be owned for at least 24 months immediately before disposition by the taxpayer, spouse, child or parent or family farm partnership of the individual or spouse.
Property Use	
- Must be used in the year of disposition or have been used in the business of farming for at least five years. The rule does not apply to corporate shares or partnership interests.	- used in the business of farming for at least 24 months by either the taxpayer, spouse or child, or parent of the taxpayer and where the person was actively engaged on a regular and continuous basis and where the gross revenue from farming exceeded all other sources of net income for that person.
- Used in the business of farming incudes, used by the taxpayer, spouse, child or parent of the taxpayer or used by a family farm partnership or corporation of the taxpayer, or the taxpayers spouse, child or parent.	- used in the business of farming for at least 24 months, by a family farm partnership or corporation of the taxpayer or taxpayer's spouse, child or parent in which such person was activley engaged on a regular and continuous basis.

(Cont'd)

CAPITAL GAINS INCLUSION RATE

Although the taxable portion of a capital gain or "inclusion rate" increases from one-half to two-thirds in 1988, 1989 and three-quarters in 1990, $500,000 of capital gain will still remain exempt from regular tax on qualified farm property. If a taxpayer has capital gains that exceed the $500,000 amount, the increased inclusion rate will result in a higher taxable income. As a result of the increased inclusion rate, the untaxable portion which is subject to alternative minimum tax (AMT) will be less, thus decreasing the potential AMT liability for property transfers in 1988 and subsequent years.

In reference to minimum tax, the government has stated that no minimum tax will be payable in the year of death for 1987 and subsequent years. This is a welcome change to the Income Tax Act and provides the opportunity for land to be transferred onto family members. This transfer would then "bump up" the V-Day or cost base value of the property to the family without triggering a minimum tax liability.

With these changes to the capital gains area, it is becoming more important to understand how the capital gains exemption can be utilized in an estate plan or simply upon sale of property to a non-family member. As it is very important to determine whether certain property qualifies as "qualified farm property", an accountant should definitely be consulted before any transfer of property is contemplated.

Contact: Merle Good
556-4237

Agri-News Briefs

DEADLINE NEARS FOR PHEASANT GROWERS

Alberta 4-H members interested in being part of the annual pheasant raising program have until March 15 to make application. Batches of 25 and 50 day-old chicks will be distributed to applicants throughout the province in late May and early June. Last year club members raised about 7,000 birds under the program. Several changes have been made this year in the 12-year-old program. Alberta 4-H pheasant club members will have to buy their own feed, and the 4-H branch will become the only contact for enquiries and book contest judging. Lyle Lister of the Brooks Wildlife Centre says under the provincial pheasant raising program, about 100,000 eggs were hatched in Alberta last year. Also, as a wrap up to 1987 4-H club participation, three members have been named winners in the pheasant record book contest. Teresa Eleniak, 18 of Tofield, who raised 150 birds last year was named first place winner, followed by Tarolyn Marie Aaserud, 14, of Craigmyle, near Hanna in second place, and Anette Svederus, 13, of Penhold, in third place. For more information on the program contact Penny Wilkes at 422-4444 in Edmonton.

WILD RICE SYMPOSIUM FEBRUARY 24

A panel of producers discussing their success in growing wild rice will be one of the highlights at the Alberta Wild Rice Symposium in Lac La Biche, February 24. Growers and prospective growers from across the province are urged to attend the one day session being held at the Alberta Vocational Centre. Along with producers, there will be updates on the wild rice industry in Alberta, a report from Saskatchewan's industry, and remarks by university researchers and other specialists. Alberta Agriculture engineering specialist John Kienholz will also discuss research in design of harvesting equipment. The symposium gets underway at 9:30 a.m. and registration is $15. For more information contact Harvey Yoder or Dave Burdek at the Alberta Agriculture office in Lac La Biche at 623-5218.

(Cont'd)

TREE NURSERY HAS A NEW NUMBER

Commercial growers as well as home gardeners should note the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in northeast Edmonton will be operating with new telephone numbers beginning in early March. The main switchboard number will become 472-6043 while the HORTLINE will change to 472-6049. Continue to use the current numbers until the change goes into effect March 6.

FERTILIZER SALES MAY BE UP IN '88

After two years of decreases, Alberta fertilizer sales may be up in 1988 according to an Alberta Agriculture report. The Farm Cash Receipts and Expenses report predicts that the reduced use and cost of fertilizer in 1987 may "necessitate increased purchases in 1988". Preliminary indications are that less fertilizer was applied in the late fall of 1987. "Therefore, the amount of fertilizer purchased by Alberta producers in 1988 will likely depend on economic and environmental conditions at planting time." If the 1988 sales increase materializes it will follow two years of sales decreases. Both a reduction in price and a reduction in use are attributed to the decline in sales figures last year. Fertilizer expenses for 1987 are estimated to be about $245 million or 14 per cent below the 1986 estimates, according to the report. The average price, as well as the volume of sales, are estimated to have declined by seven per cent last year. The Alberta Farm Fertilizer Price Protection Plan, which paid out $19.4 million in 1986, is expected to pay out a further $17 million in 1987. For more information on the report contact Bill Schissel in Edmonton at 427-4006.

FOODS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO MIGRAINES

While there are many factors that can contribute to a migraine headache, research has shown that some foods can bring on suffering, particularly if the person has an allergy to that food. Wheat, citrus fruits, tea, coffee, pork, chocolate, milk, grapes, yeast, pineapple and cola drinks are among some of the migraine-associated allergens. For more information or sources of literature on the subject, contact Alberta Agriculture's regional food and nutrition specialist, Suzanne Tenold in Airdrie at 948-8504.

For Immediate Release

POTATO MARKETING BOARD PLEBISCITE ANNOUNCED

The Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council has announced it is conducting a plebiscite to decide on the establishment of an Alberta potato marketing board. The plebiscite was initiated at the request of the Alberta Potato Commission.

The purpose of the proposed Alberta Potato Marketing Board would be to establish and regulate the minimum prices paid for seed and table potatoes produced and sold in Alberta. Prices would not be set for potatoes sold to processors. The proposed plan would not control or restrict production. The Alberta Potato Marketing Board would assume all responsibilities and powers now vested in the Alberta Potato Commission, including the delivery of market development programs, research projects and field services, and the administration of the Advance Payment of Crops Act.

In order to receive a ballot to vote on the plebiscite, eligible potato producers must register with the Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council before 12:00 noon on March 1, 1988. All Alberta producers who have grown potatoes for sale in the 1987 crop year on land exceeding 2.023 hectares (5 acres) in area are considered eligible to vote on the plebiscite.

Registration forms for the plebiscite have been mailed to potato producers. Any eligible producer who has not received a registration form should contact the Marketing Council office prior to the March 1, 1988 deadline.

Further information regarding the proposed Alberta Potato Marketing Board or the conduct of the plebiscite is available from all directors of the Alberta Potato Commission, and from the Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council. The Marketing Council is located at #305, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, T6H 5T6; phone 427-2164.

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Contact: Ken Smith
General Manager
Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council
Edmonton

Phone: (403) 427-2164

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AGRI-NEWS

February 22, 1988

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

Markets show improvement for grain and oilseed producers

Although it's still a long way from a full recovery, world wheat, feedgrains and oilseeds markets are making a turnaround, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Better grain and oilseed prices are expected throughout the industry this year and into 1989. World consumption of these commodities, is expected to outstrip crop production for the first time in several years.

With further stock reduction one of the key factors in price improvement, progress is being made to tighten supplies and reduce the vast inventories which brought the market to its knees in the mid-1980s.

Charlie Pearson, a grain market analyst with Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton, says cereal grain and oilseed producers have reason for optimism this year as prices edge upward.

The specialist says oilseed prices show the most improvement, while wheat and feedgrains continue to feel the pressure of oversupply. He makes his comments in the latest Wheat, Feedgrains and Oilseed Market Situation and Outlook.

In the quarterly report, Pearson says Alberta farmers can expect a Canadian Wheat Board final payment of between $15 and $25 per tonne for their top two grades of wheat this year, and initial payments to be $10 to $20 per tonne higher for the 1988-89 crop.

He says there may be a final payment for feedgrains of up to about $5 per tonne, but no increase in the initial payment should be expected. Although the oilseed market won't be as high it was at the end of 1987, it should stay in the $240 to $270 per tonne range (Alberta elevator/crush bids) through until fall.

"Although there are always unknowns, all indications are that the markets are showing improvement," says Pearson. "Feedgrains aren't doing as well as other commodities, but there are even some bright spots in their forecast.

"The markets were at the bottom and had no where to go but up. There are good indicators for at least medium-term improvements throughout the grains industry."

(Cont'd)

Markets show improvement for grain and oilseed producers (cont'd)

World wheat production in 1987-88 is estimated at 502 million tonnes while world consumption is estimated at 520 million tonnes. In Canada, 1987 wheat production is estimated at 26.3 million tonnes, down about 16 per cent from the previous year's record crop of 31.4 million tonnes. Western Canada supplies the bulk of the country's production, last year yielding 25.5 million tonnes or 97 per cent of the Canadian total.

It is predicted Western Canadian wheat production in the 1988-89 crop year will be little changed at about 26.5 million tonnes.

Although a drop in world coarse grains carryover (inventories) is expected in 1987, this won't be reflected in prices because competition remains intense among major exporters attempting to attract buyers.

In spite of record world coarse grain usage of 817 million tonnes this year, that will still leave a 1987-88 year-end carryover of about 193 million tonnes - the second largest ever.

Because of the market situation, Pearson expects Canadian farmers will seed about eight per cent less barley this year or about 11.5 million acres. He estimates domestic barley usage will be strong in the 1988-89 crop year, but exports will be down.

Looking at oats, Pearson doesn't expect the market to be as strong in the coming crop year as it was in 1987-88. He does expect a "substantial" Canadian Wheat Board final payment for oats this spring, and a return to more traditional price ranges in 1988. He noted however the top quality milling and pony oats market should remain strong.

For the second year in a row, world oilseed consumption is expected to be greater than oilseed production. The 1987-88 production is estimated at 200 million tonnes compared to disappearance of 202 million tonnes.

Because of profit potential, Pearson expects prairie farmers to "significantly" increase canola acreage to about 7.6 million acres this year. With a relatively tight supply situation, he expects markets to remain volatile over the summer as canola prices react to crop production prospects for both the Canadian canola crop and other oilseed crops around the world.

With elevator crusher bids expected to be in the $240 to $270 per tonne range through til fall, he advises farmers to lock about a quarter of their 1988 crop in at these prices.

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Contact: Charlie Pearson
427-5386

February 22, 1988
For immediate release

Spruce Grove, Strathmore and Stony Plain women produce top quilts in Alberta

A Spruce Grove area woman who has been quilting for the past 54 years, has won the first Canada Packers Alberta Quilt Competition in Camrose.

Ethel Suder, of Winterburn, won $900 for her 78-inch by 92-inch "Starchain" quilt. One of 45 quilts entered in the competition, it becomes the first work to hang in the Canada Packers Alberta Quilt Collection.

Lorraine Stangness of Strathmore won $300 for her second place entry, while two sisters, Cindy Rankin and Gloria McFarlane of Stony Plain, won $200 for their third place quilt.

Mrs. Suder says she began her quilting career many years ago working with her mother-in-law on projects around the home. She became more involved in design and fancy-quilt work about 20 years ago. She has won many awards over the years. This Starchain quilt was entered in the provincial competition after winning first place honors and being named "best of the show" at the 1987 Klondike Days in Edmonton.

Rae Hunter, chairperson of the first quilt competition, says Canada Packers has sponsored similar projects in Ontario and Manitoba, and has established collections in those provinces.

The entries for the provincial contest were themselves first place winners in local quilt competitions conducted in conjunction with fairs and exhibitions across the province. Age of the quilt makers in the 1987 competition ranged from 17 to 84.

The Alberta competition was sponsored jointly by Canada Packers, the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies (AAAS) and Alberta Agriculture. Final judging was held in conjunction with the AAAS annual meeting in Camrose in mid-February. The quilts were on public display at the Duggan Mall in Camrose.

(Cont'd)

Top three Alberta quilters selected (cont'd)

"From all standpoints the competition was very successful," says Hunter. "The quality of quilts was just excellent and the display was very well received by the public.

"Much of the credit for success must go to the many volunteers from the Camrose Regional Exhibition Association and surrounding areas who helped set up and man the display."

A quilt workshop, organized by a group of volunteers from Daysland and held in conjunction with the AAAS annual meeting was also very successful.

Hunter says the 1988-89 Canada Packers Alberta Quilt Competition has been launched although the location for the final judging next year, has yet to be announced. For more information on the competition contact Rae Hunter at 427-2171 in Edmonton or Chris Maggs at 332-4821 in Grimshaw.

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Contact: Rae Hunter
427-2171

(Note: The winner is Mrs. Milton Suder of Winterburn)

February 22, 1988
For immediate release

Beef market prospects good for producers and consumers

With various pressures on the cattle industry, Alberta cow/calf producers and consumers may have the best seats in the house during the 1988 beef market performance, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Marilyn Johnson, a livestock analyst with the department's market analysis branch in Edmonton, in her quarterly report says while the market situation is good news on one hand, it puts the squeeze on feedlot owners and meat packers to maintain profit margins.

Johnson predicts there will be reduced beef output in 1988 and strong competition for the industry from pork and poultry products. Reduced beef output means there will be demand for cattle which will keep the prices paid to farmers fairly high. But with competition from other meats at the grocery store, there will be little or no room for beef price increases on the retail end.

"Increased supplies of competing meats will lessen demand for beef and pressure retail prices," says Johnson. "At the same time reduced feeder and slaughter cattle supplies will place upward price pressure on both feedlots and packers. The importance of maintaining a flow of cattle to both packing houses and feedlots will keep these players actively bidding, but also acutely aware of each penny."

The specialist expects slaughter steer prices to reach a high of between $83 and $88 per hundredweight (cwt) in the second quarter of the year. She predicts feeder steer prices to reach a high of between $128 and $132 per cwt in the second quarter before declining in the fall.

On the North American scene, Alberta was the odd man out last year with a slight increase in beef production compared to the rest of the continent. Canadian cattle slaughter declined eight per cent in 1987 parallelling a pattern evident in the U.S. market, says Johnson.

And although Alberta cattlemen are holding on to more cows and heifers to expand their herds, they managed to produce enough steers to create a one per cent increase in slaughter numbers over 1986.

(Cont'd)

"When this is combined with a year over year increase of four per cent in Alberta live slaughter exports, Alberta's total output for 1987 rose two per cent from 1986 output levels," says the specialist.

"This growth in Alberta slaughter cattle output can be accounted for by the drop in feeder exports to Ontario, the increase in feeder imports into Alberta from Saskatchewan, and three consecutive years of increases in Alberta calf crops."

The continent-wide reduction in beef supplies resulted in strong slaughter cattle prices throughout 1987. Alberta direct sale steer prices averaged $83.45 per cwt for 1987 compared to $75.60 per cwt in 1986.

Because of low feed-grain prices and Alberta's natural advantage to finish livestock, the province was an importer of feeder cattle in 1987 and an exporter of slaughter animals.

Alberta movement of feeder cattle to Ontario continued to decline last year. The 1987 feeder exports to Ontario were 67,710 head compared to 106,120 head in 1986 and 146,967 in 1985. With the strengthening of demand for feeder cattle in Alberta, imports from other provinces also increased. For the first 10 months of 1987 Alberta imports of feeders from Saskatchewan increased by 44 per cent to 158,320 head.

Looking ahead at cattle supplies this year, Johnson says Alberta feedlot owners may again be scrambling for stock as more farmers appear to be finishing their own cattle to either slaughter weights or heavy yearling weights, with their own home grown grain.

"Increased imports and reduced exports of feeders have supplemented the supply situation for feeding operations," says the specialist. "Demand for the foreseen limited supply of feeders could be dampened somewhat if the price of feedgrains increases this summer."

For more information or a copy of the Livestock Situation and Outlook contact Marilyn Johnson in Edmonton at 427-5376.

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Contact: Marilyn Johnson
427-5376

February 22, 1988
For immediate release

Production increases affecting hog prices

With hog production increasing across North America, prices are tumbling from the record highs of 1987, but should not fall below the break even point for prolonged periods this year, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Although U.S. producers haven't increased production as much as expected, Canadian farmers have been steadily gaining, creating a two per cent increase in total output in 1987 over 1986.

The supply situation is expected to hold the price under $61 per hundredweight (cwt) in the first quarter of the year, before it climbs to about $66 cwt in the second quarter, and drops to the mid-$50 cwt range in the third and fourth quarters.

Marilyn Johnson, a livestock analyst with the market analysis branch in Edmonton, says in her quarterly report Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, had the greatest jump in production last year with five, 13 and five per cent increases respectively.

The increased domestic production, particularly in the fourth quarter, pushed 1987 Canadian hog slaughter over 14 million head for the year.

The market specialist says prices this year aren't expected to hit the highs of $90.90 per hundredweight (cwt) that the industry saw last summer.

"As both Canadian and American pork production increased through the fourth quarter of 1987, prices followed a sharp downward trend," says Johnson. "In Alberta, producers watched as prices fell from a September monthly average price of $85.28 per cwt to a November monthly average of $62.73, a drop of over $20 per cwt.

"Temporary price improvement was evident early in December when supply shortages in Quebec coupled with a seasonal demand by packers to secure their Christmas ham supplies saw weekly prices rally by $8 per cwt. Unfortunately for producers, once this temporary market condition had passed the market was again pressured lower by the volume of hogs on offer."

(Cont'd)

Production increases affecting hog prices (cont'd)

The analyst says recent U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) inventory reports suggest the U.S. hog expansion rate is not as rapid as expected. She says this may limit a further dramatic price slide.

The USDA attributes this moderation in rate of hog expansion to farmers expecting lower returns from hogs in 1988, producers are using recent profits to pay off debts and strengthen their financial positions, and expected increases in feeding costs.

"In the U.S. corn belt, total costs of finishing a 220-pound hog in a farrow to finish operation were estimated between $47.75 (U.S.) and $50.02 (U.S.) per cwt for the 1987 period," says Johnson. "While the 1987 annual market prices was above these break even levels, fourth quarter prices were sufficiently low to generative negative margins. This is one of the supporting factors for a more moderate expansion in the U.S. hog industry."

Johnson says the price outlook for Alberta market hogs in 1988 is expected to be similar to the U.S. market.

Alberta average index-100 hogs prices are forecast to range between $58 and $61 per cwt during the first quarter of 1988 with most price weakness felt in March. From April onwards prices are expected to improve gradually but not to exceed $66 per cwt.

Late in the third quarter and into the fourth quarter of 1988 supplies are expected to increase and pressure prices into the mid-$50 per cwt range.

For more information or a complete copy of the report contact Marilyn Johnson in Edmonton at 427-5376.

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Contact: Marilyn Johnson
427-5376

February 22, 1988
For immediate release

Optomistic outlook for sheep industry

With ample room for production expansion and increased consumer demand for lamb, it looks like another good year ahead for Alberta's sheep industry, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Ron Gietz, an economist with the market analysis branch in Edmonton in his quarterly report on the industry says, following the best year on record, lamb prices should remain high at least through the first half of the 1988.

"Although slaughter lamb prices in 1988 are unlikely to surpass the record high levels of 1987, the overall outlook for the sheep industry remains decidedly optimistic," says Gietz.

Alberta slaughter lamb prices are expected to trend slowly upward in the short term in response to seasonally reduced supplies and seasonally increased demand.

The specialist says local prices should peak sometime in the second quarter, likely trading in the $100 to $105 per hundredweight (cwt) range. Feeder lamb prices are also expected to remain high in early 1988.

Slaughter prices at the Lambco processing plant at Innisfail averaged $82.50 to $85.50 per cwt in the fourth quarter of 1987, dropping from a high of $101 to $104 per cwt in late May and early June. The price average for 1987 ranged between $90.76 to $93.76 per cwt, about $9.38 higher than the 1986 average.

In the Sheep and Lamb Situation and Outlook, Gietz says Canadian lamb slaughter was down about 5.5 per cent last year, with Alberta, at 15.2 per cent, showing the greatest drop in slaughter volumes.

Canadian packing houses processed 217,955 head of lambs, while Alberta processed 69,892 head of the national total.

"Part of the decline in Alberta slaughter volumes was a result of increased movement of feeder and slaughter lambs into U.S. markets." says Gietz. "However, lamb retention for flock building was the main cause of reduced slaughter volumes."

(Cont'd)

Optimistic outlook for sheep industry (cont'd)

Although overall lamb and mutton imports into Canada were down in 1987, imports of one type of meat product are increasing. Gietz says there is a move away from the frozen meat products and an increase in the fresh and chilled products, especially from Australia and New Zealand.

In the first 10 months of 1987 Canada imported some 3,956,618 pounds of fresh and chilled lamb, representing a 43 per cent increase over 1986. Australia, shipping about 2.4 million pounds, supplied the bulk of this meat, followed by New Zealand with about 618,000 pounds, and the U.S. with about 873,000 pounds.

Looking ahead, Gietz says the attractive prices in nearby U.S. markets will continue to draw Alberta lambs south, putting upward pressure on Lambco bids. And given the current grain prices, feeder lamb prices should continue to remain high in early 1988.

"The small size of the domestic sheep industry means that substantial herd expansion can continue before an adverse impact on prices will be noted, particularly in Alberta," says the market analyst. "Steady to increasing consumer demand, linked to rising income levels, is another positive factor for the domestic sheep industry. Factors likely to limit upward price movements in North America include large supplies of competing meats, slowing increasing U.S. slaughter volumes and increasing competition from lower priced imported lamb."

For more information or a copy of the quarterly report, contact Ron Gietz in Edmonton at 427-4002.

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Contact: Ron Gietz
427-4002

February 22, 1988
For immediate release

Experts to address agriculture forecast conference

Market specialists from Canada and the United States will be in Calgary in mid-March to give Alberta producers and agri-businessmen their best predictions on the future of grain, oilseed and livestock markets.

About a dozen speakers are scheduled to address the ninth annual Accent '88 - Taking Stock conference at the Marlborough Inn, March 15 and 16.

Co-sponsored this year by Alberta Agriculture and the Alberta Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA), the conference provides farmers with an outlook on a full range of farm commodities, including cereal grains, feedgrains, oilseeds, special crops, hogs and cattle.

Ron Gietz, an Alberta Agriculture market economist and a conference organizer, says anyone planning to attend should register as soon as possible. Conference registration is limited to 300 participants.

Cost of the full conference, including meals and proceedings is $100, while the conference and proceedings, without meals is $60. The proceedings report, alone, will be available for $15.

John Morris, vice-president of economic services of Safeway Inc. of Oakland California will be the keynote banquet speaker March 15. Morris will provide an overview of industry trends from the perspective of a retail grocery chain executive.

The conference opens with Dr. Paul Boothe of the University of Alberta in Edmonton discussing The International Economy - Clouds on the Horizon; Dr. Bill Wilson of the University of North Dakota, discussing Grain Quality And Its Implications for World Demand; and Gail Martell, an executive and meteorologist with E.F. Hutton and Co. Inc. of Wisconsin discussing the world weather situation.

(Cont'd)

Experts to address agriculture forecast conference (cont'd)

During the March 16 morning sessions, Dr. Gene Murra of South Dakota State University will provide the North American hog outlook; Lynn Malmberg, of Lakeside Farm Industries in Brooks, will provide the local feedgrain outlook; Steve Freed, senior oilseed analyst with Dean, Witter and Reynolds in Chicago will provide the international oilseeds outlook; and Stewart Campbell, of Canbra Foods Ltd. of Lethbridge will provide the Canadian oilseeds outlook.

In the final session Dr. Wayne Purcell of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University will provide the U.S. cattle outlook; Dennis McGivern, of XL Foods Systems Ltd. in Calgary will provide the Canadian Cattle Outlook, and Fred Boyce of Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton will provide the alternative crops outlook.

The conference will wrap up with Lloyd Quantz of Agritrends in Calgary providing an industry overview on the theme "Planning for the 1990's".

Registration forms are available from any Alberta Agriculture district office, or the market analysis branch in Edmonton. Forms and payment must be returned to the Alberta Agricultural Economics Association in Edmonton.

For more information on Accent '88 - Taking Stock, contact Ron Gietz in Edmonton at 427-4002.

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Contact: Ron Gietz
427-4002

For immediate release

Meat goat marketing seminar planned in March

Alberta goat producers should plan to attend a day-long meat goat marketing strategy seminar March 5 in Calmar.

Sponsored by Goats West, a chapter of the Alberta Goat Breeders Association and Alberta Agriculture, the seminar will get underway at 10 a.m. in the Calmar Legion Hall. Calmar is a community just southwest of Edmonton on Highway 39.

Wray Whitmore, Alberta Agriculture's sheep and goat specialist in Edmonton, says the seminar will be of interest to all goat producers whether they exclusively raise meat animals, or sell some stock for meat as a sideline to dairy production.

The seminar will include a panel discussion in the morning with individuals experienced in meat goat production and marketing.

During the afternoon session presentations will be made on pasture management, general nutrition, herd health, condition scoring, and facilities.

A general wrap-up discussion will follow afternoon coffee.

Cost of the seminar is $5, which includes lunch.

For more information on the seminar contact Wray Whitmore at 427-5077 or Leslie Jackson at 985-3863.

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Contact: Wray Whitmore
427-5077

For immediate release

Retail turkey prices expected to drop

While it's not the best news from the farmer's point of view, Alberta consumers can expect plenty of lower-priced turkey meats on supermarket shelves this year, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Al Dooley, dairy and poultry analyst with the market analysis branch in Edmonton, says with more than 16 million kilograms of turkey meat in stock at the beginning of the year, and increased production quotas for 1988, prices are dropping at both the producer and retail level.

"The relatively large opening stock situation coupled with a larger national quota allocation for 1988 will require a sharp increase in domestic disappearance to reduce turkey stocks by the year-end," says Dooley in his recently released quarterly report on the industry.

Canadian turkey production in 1987 is estimated at 113.4 million kilograms, up about nine per cent from a year ago. Total supplies were 6.7 per cent greater than a year earlier with tom turkey supplies up 8.8 per cent.

On the national scene, disappearance, which is a market term for all product uses including retail consumer sales, increased only a modest 2.8 per cent in 1987, says Dooley. This results in a significant increase in year-end turkey stock levels to 16.6 million kilograms.

In Alberta, turkey production increased 14.9 per cent to 9.7 million kilograms in 1987. Compared to a year earlier turkey supplies were up more than 35 per cent.

"Despite the large increase in total supplies, Alberta's year-end stocks were almost 0.5 million kilograms less than a year earlier," says Dooley. "Excellent provincial usage and some significant out-of-province shipments were both factors in reducing the storage stock level."

With production increases expected this year prices are generally expected to drop through mid-1988 says the specialist.

(Cont'd)

"In Alberta, producer prices should follow the same general downward trend through mid-1988 as is predicted for Canada and the United States," says Dooley. "But individual market pressures, makes it difficult to forecast the direction of a price change for specific bird weights in any market."

For more information on the turkey situation and outlook contact Al Dooley in Edmonton at 427-5382.

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Contact: Al Dooley
427-5382

February 22, 1988
For immediate release

Conservation farmers plan annual convention

Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga will be the guest speaker in early March at the 10th annual Alberta Conservation Tillage Society convention in Calgary.

The Minister will address the group of conservation farmers at the March 9 banquet.

The convention and trade fair which is being held at the Marlborough Inn March 9 and 10 has adopted "Conservation - Keeping The Farm Together" as this year's theme.

The idea is to discuss the latest technology and to learn a few tips on how to maximize returns from crops to help pay the bills.

Along with Mr. Elzinga, other speakers include Dr. N. Juma of the University of Alberta discussing the latest findings of the effects of tillage on soil micro-organisms; Brett Meinert, a farmer from Shaunavon, Saskatchewan providing an overview of how he successfully continous crops in an area where most farmers use a wheat-fallow rotation; and agriculture consultant, Ken Stickland, providing tips and advice on marketing.

All society members as well as interested producers are urged to register as soon as possible. Conference registration is $50 per person (or $80 including spouse). The fee also covers the March 9 banquet and March 10 luncheon.

Accommodation can be arranged directly with the Marlborough Inn, 1316 - 33 Street N.E., Calgary, Alberta, phone 1-800-661-1464.

For further information, contact the nearest Alberta Agriculture district office or call Garth Cochran in Calgary at 274-0563.

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Contact: Garth Cochran
274-0563

EDITOR'S NOTE

On December 16, 1987, Michael Wilson presented a Notice of Ways and Means Motion to amend the Income Tax Act, which contained many of his tax reform proposals of June 18, 1987.

For farmers, the highlight of Wilson's amendments is the retraction of the modified accrual accounting system. Extensive lobbying on the part of farm groups and individuals appears to have had the intended effect and the government has indicated that it no longer intends to proceed with the modified accrual basis accounting for farmers as set out in the White Paper proposals.

The government has instead decided to consult with farm groups on a proposal under which all farmers may continue to account on a cash basis, with special measures that will apply where a cash basis loss is generated.

Although the government has abandoned the modified accrual basis accounting proposal, it has re-introduced a proposal for discussion whereby, losses on the cash basis will only be deductible if they exceed the cost or value of inventory on hand at the end of a fiscal year.

Through this approach, the federal government is acknowledging their original objective to limit cash base losses through inventory accumulation without the requirement that the entire agricultural industry file on a modified accrual accounting system.

In order to explain this proposal and other new rules, Merle Good, a farm management economist with Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch in Olds has prepared three articles.

The first article deals with the $500,000 capital gains exemption, the second article with farm income and losses, and the third with the various tax measures affecting farmers.

Tax Reform II - The Sequel
By Merle Good

Part 2 of a three-part series)

FARM INCOME AND EXPENSES

The government has indicated that it does not intend to proceed with the White Paper proposals dealing with Farm Income and Expenses. It recognizes the desirability of allowing farmers to continue to use the cash basis of accounting and the revised proposals will ensure that the option to use the cash basis of accounting for tax filing for farmers will be maintained.

The controversial modified accrual accounting system will not be implemented. Nevertheless, the government is seeking recommendations from the agricultural industry on how to restrict cash base losses in some manner so that agriculture is not perceived to be a type of tax shelter nor an enticement for hobbyists to use the tax provisions which should be targeted to bona fide farmers.

The federal government has decided to focus their consultations on the Blenkarn Report recommendation and on an alternative approach described in a paper entitled Tax Treatment of Farm Losses.

The approach to be selected is intended to be effective for the 1989 taxation year or if the consultations are completed quickly, legislation for these measures could be introduced earlier, with the rule becoming effective after Royal Assent is received.

Profit Test

The government wishes to retain the aspect of the objective profit test rather than relying on the subjective "reasonable expectation of profit" test. Under the previous Tax Reform Proposals, a producer would have to have an accrual profit at least three out of seven years. If this test was not met, a taxpayer in a specific year would not be a qualifying farmer.

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Finance is committed to the profit test, but is willing however, to allow farm losses to be deducted in a specific year where the three out of seven year profit test has not been met. This would only be in cases where the taxpayer can demonstrate that they had a reasonable expectation of profit in that year and that a profit would have been made in the absence of special circumstances, such as drought, depressed prices, ill health or other similar circumstances.

Gross Revenue Test

The gross revenue test, proposed by the White Paper, was to restrict deductibility of losses of part-time farmers to $15,000, by comparing gross farm sales to off-farm income.

As the gross revenue test is arbitrary, finance has indicated the gross revenue test will be the subject of further consultations with farm groups.

Start-Up Farmers

The White Paper proposals essentially provided start-up farmers exemption from the profit and gross revenue tests in the first four years of operation. However, in the following three years, the beginning farmer would have had to pass both tests to satisfy the three out of seven year requirement of these tests, in order to maintain full-time farming status.

The proposals described in the White Paper regarding start-up farmers are now open for discussion purposes. What is required is a method for demonstrating an expectation of profit but not the rigid requirement of three out of seven years of profit. Other restrictions on eligibility rules for start-up farmers are sought to prevent the misuse of any start-up farmer exemptions.

(Cont'd)

Tax Reform II - The Sequel - Part 2 (cont'd)

Calculation of Farm Income and Losses

The Blenkarn committee approach recommended to the government that farmers be allowed to use the cash basis of accounting but that cash losses be restricted to a maximum of $10,000 and this limit be reduced by $1 for each $2 of off-farm income in excess of $30,000. As a result no cash base farm losses would be deductible for farmers who had off-farm income in excess of $50,000.

The committee also recommended that no restriction apply to deduction of farm losses calculated on an accrual basis and that taxpayers could choose to report on that basis but could not thereafter change.

Alternate Approach

Rather than accepting the committee's proposal, the government intends to seek the views of farm organizations concerning new proposals which would revise losses calculated on a cash basis. It is suggested, farmers may continue to use the cash basis with special measures that would apply only where a cash base loss is generated. In such cases, it is proposed that an inventory adjustment be required to operate in a manner similar to the existing optional value of livestock inventory provision.

The proposal for an inventory adjustment appears to require that a loss calculated on the cash basis be reduced or eliminated to the extent the farmer still has purchased inventory on hand, irrespective of which year the inventory was purchased. The adjustment would apply to purchased supplies on hand such as feed, seed and fertilizer and to livestock inventories. Accordingly it would not apply to crops in the field or harvested crops.

The proposals suggest losses could only be deducted to the extent they exceed the cost or value of purchased inventory on hand at the end of the year. Any loss disallowed in one year because of the inventory adjustment, is to be carried forward and deducted in calculating income for the next year.

(Cont'd)

If this seems rather complicated, perhaps the following examples will illustrate how the adjustment would operate.

1. Farmer (A) has a cash profit of $20,000 in a particular year. During the year, farmer A purchases $30,000 worth of livestock inventory. One half the cattle are sold in the next year for $15,000 and half are retained in the breeding herd.

a) Current system - Cash Accounting:

	Year One
Cash profit before acquisitions	$20,000
Livestock purchases	(30,000)
Cash loss	(10,000)

	Year Two
Cash Profit	$15,000

b) Proposed System Cash Accounting with Inventory Adjustment

	Year One
Cash Profit before Acquisitions	$20,000
Livestock Purchases	(30,000)
Cash Loss	(10,000)
Inventory Adjustment	+10,000
Deductible Farm Loss	0

	Year Two
Cash Profit	$15,000
Prev. Year's Inventory Adj.	-10,000
Farm Income	5,000

As demonstrated by these examples, the total farm income or loss remains the same over time, however, the availability to claim a loss is postponed until the loss exceeds the cost or value of inventory on hand at the end of each year. In other words, a farmer cannot create a loss by buying purchased inventory and claim this loss against other sources of off-farm income.

Transitional Provision

The Department of Finance, in their re-analysis of the farm income and loss provisions, have realized that a transitional provision is necessary on inventories when converting from the present cash basis system to their proposed cash base system with inventory adjustments.

(Cont'd)

Tax Reform II - The Sequel - Part 2 (cont'd)

Without this transitional relief the cash base losses that may be incurred in the new system would have to be offset against any inventory that remains on hand at the end of the first year, which may have been acquired before the new system is introduced. This would have the effect of disallowing current operating losses for some farmers in the early years of the new system.

Their recommended alternative is to reduce the amount of inventory adjustment over a four-year period by $15,000 the first year, $12,000, $9,000 and $5,000 in the three subsequent years, respectively. Although this would provide some form of transitional relief, the figures chosen by Finance will not allow a loss to be claimed if a producer's cash loss is less than his inventory value minus $15,000 in the first year.

In summary, eliminating the modified accrual accounting proposal for all farmers is welcomed by the farm community. However, the proposal to utilize an expanded optional value of livestock inventory provision that would bring all types of inventory purchases back into income, in essence mirrors the intended effect of the previous modified accrual accounting system. In other words, rather than going from a modified accrual accounting system back to cash with the cash base reserve, finance officials have opted for cash base accounting with the addition of inventory purchases as an add-back feature to arrive at a type of modified accrual figure.

A major concern still remains therefore, in the proposed elimination of claiming losses as a result of purchased inventory in a certain year. The consequences of this provision should be analyzed very carefully by the farming community and representations made to Michael Wilson to reflect their analysis.

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Contact: Merle Good
556-4237

Agri-News Briefs

TILLAGE MAY REDUCE PLANT GROWTH IN CANALS

Irrigation specialists will be watching five test areas later this year to determine if rototilling the bottom of dry irrigation canals will help reduce weeds and improve water flow and efficiency. The experiments conducted by Alberta Agriculture in conjunction with Agriculture Canada is attempting to see if exposing the plant roots to oxygen and freezing will kill them off. Most of the older irrigation supply canals in southern Alberta have an accumulation of decaying organic matter and silt that has been deposited over many years of use. The fairly deep layer provides good growing conditions and protection for several weeds including varieties of pondweeds, water-plantain and milfoil. Five test sections about 20 metres long in canals in the Taber and Bow River irrigation districts were tilled with garden tillers. Depth of tillage ranged from 15 to 30 centimetres. It is hoped that the disruption of the insulating organic mat; the exposure of tubers and crowns to the sun and freezing temperatures; and the oxygenation of the soil will all contribute to the winter kill of rooted aquatic weeds.

4-H MEMBERS ASKED TO NOMINATE YOUNG FARMERS

Alberta 4-H club members are being asked to submit nominations to the Outstanding Young Farmer Program organized by the Canada Jaycees. Each club making a nomination will receive a certificate of participation and could win an engraved gavel if the nominee is chosen as one of the regional finalists. Adele Reichert, a regional 4-H specialist in Vermilion, says to be eligible for the Outstanding Young Farmer Program, nominees must be between 18 and 39 years of age and operate a farm from which two-thirds of their income is derived. A spokesman for program sponsor Hoechst Canada Inc. says, "many worthy candidates may be found amongst ex-4-H'ers living in the community." Deadline to submit nominations is February 28. For more information contact any Alberta Agriculture regional 4-H offices.

(Cont'd)

MISSOURI LIVESTOCK JUDGE TO TOUR ALBERTA

A 22-year-old university student from Farber, Missouri will be making a tour of Alberta in July as part of his prize of winning the Top Overall Individual College Judging Championship at the 1988 National Western Stock Show in Denver. The annual award is sponsored by the Alberta Canada All Breeds Association (ACABA). Ralph Nelson, who is majoring in agricultural economics and animal sciences at the University of Missouri will be attending the Calgary Stampede, the Bashaw provincial 4-H heifer show , the Red Deer Westerner, Olds College and Northland's Klondike Days in Edmonton. ACABA vice-president Ken Lang, in making the announcement says "Bringing a young, high calibre livestock person to Alberta during our summer show season enables the winner to see a good cross section of our entire livestock industry in a limited period of time."
Working with the support of Alberta Agriculture, ACABA is a non profit organization with 21 member associations from the dairy, beef and sheep industry involved in the international promotion of Alberta livestock.

1988 FEED EXPENSES NOT EXPECTED TO CHANGE

Although a lot will depend on what world grain prices do this year, livestock feeding costs aren't expected to change much in 1988 according to an Alberta Agriculture report. In a summary of income and expenses the department says, "feed grain prices are expected to remain at or near their present levels in 1988, but much depends on circumstances in the global grain marketplace. Producers in the meat and dairy sectors should continue to experience positive net margins well into 1988."
The report on feed bought from commercial distributors (as opposed to other farmers) estimates 1987 feed expenses at $162 million, which is marginally lower than 1986 levels. It points out that many feed costs dropped through 1987. As an example, feed grain was about $68 a tonne in January 1987 and about $52 per tonne in November 1987. The average price of hay in 1986 was $79.70 a ton while the projected average for 1987 is $60.70 a ton. Although prices were down, provincial programs such as the old Alberta Feed Grain Market Adjustment Program and the new Crow Benefit Offset Program also helped by providing some $65 million in assistance to farmers. For more information on expenses contact Bill Schissel in Edmonton at 427-4006.

(Cont'd)

GETTING A GRIP ON RODENTS

Hog farmers and other producers trying to control a mice problem around their farm buildings have a real challenge ahead of them, says an Alberta Agriculture publication. Although there are virtually no rats in the province, mice cost producers hundreds of dollars each year in damaged buildings and contaminated feed. Mice eat hog feed, but contaminate as much as 10 times more. Heating and insulation costs escalate as ceiling and wall insulation is removed or destroyed. Rodents can also carry diseases. A recent Beef and Bacon Newsletter says they may be small but mighty hard critters to get rid of. Mice reach sexual maturity at six weeks, gestate only 16 to 18 days and produce five to eight young per litter. With sheltered nesting sites and a good food supply they can produce a population explosion in any swine barn in short order. Mice have front teeth which are harder than mild steel and are able to gnaw through soft concrete and aluminum siding. Mice can climb outside or inside pipes; up wooden poles or walls, walk along horizontal wires, pipes or conduits; and can flatten their bodies and crawl through a six millimetre (one-quarter inch) crack, but not a six millimetre hole. The newsletter suggests several ways to reduce the mouse problem and rodent proof your farm. For a copy of Vol. 3 No. 3 of the newsletter contact Alberta Agriculture regional livestock or swine specialists at 674-8248 or 340-5336.

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AGRI-NEWS

APR 1988

February 29, 1988

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

February 29, 1988
For immediate release

Alberta irrigation census planned for March

The first-ever comprehensive irrigation farming census is being conducted by Alberta Agriculture's statistics branch in March.

The uniquely Alberta survey, which will collect information for the 1987 calendar year, will supplement and update general Statistics Canada information provided through its 1986 Census of Agriculture.

"Because irrigation is primarily carried out only in the western provinces and, with the exception of Alberta, occupies only a limited acreage, the 1986 Census of Agriculture was predominantly geared to dryland agriculture," says John Calpas of Lethbridge, co-ordinator of the irrigation census. "The type of detail and information peculiar to irrigation farming was limited."

With the support and co-operation of Alberta Environment, the Alberta Irrigation Projects Association, and all of Alberta's irrigation districts, the statistics branch is conducting the census during March.

"We urge all irrigation farmers and agricultural water users throughout Alberta to complete and return the irrigation questionnaire," says Calpas.

"The compilation and analysis will be on a summary level basis since individual responses will remain strictly confidential.

"I believe the irrigation census will point to trends and opportunities in the agricultural industry which will be useful for future planning and will benefit both irrigation and dryland sectors."

There are some 1.2 million acres under irrigation in Alberta. Nearly 7,000 Alberta farmers are known to be water users within the province's 13 irrigation districts, or hold private licenses with Alberta Environment.

Although as much as 95 per cent of irrigation is carried out in southern Alberta within the South Saskatchewan River Basin, the irrigation census will cover the total province because all regions of Alberta have some farmers who irrigate crops.

(Cont'd)

Alberta irrigation census planned for March (cont'd)

While irrigated land occupies only four per cent of Alberta's cultivated land acreage, the gross annual production from irrigation farms represents some 13 per cent of gross annual farm production, or about $530 million annually.

More than 30 different commercial crops are grown under irrigation and the irrigated areas have been responsible for the evolvement of one of the most intensive cattle-feeding regions in Canada.

"In particular, the questionnaire is geared to an objective and unbiased documentation of numerous specifics of the irrigation industry in both the crop and livestock sectors," says Calpas. "Considering the mosaic of inter-relationships, the diversity of production and related agri-business supply and processing under irrigation, becomes rather complex.

"The 1987 irrigation census will provide an update and opportunity for the Statistics Branch to better analyse and characterize the nature, scope and impacts of irrigation developments in Alberta."

Preliminary results of the irrigation census are expected to be available in the fall of 1988.

For further information on the project contact:

John Calpas
Irrigation Census Co-ordinator
(403) 427-4011
(403) 381-5145

OR...

Keir Packer
Crop Statistician
Statistics Branch
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Contact: John Calpas
381-5145

February 29, 1988
For immediate release

Pork builds a new lean reputation

Meal planners avoiding pork because they believe it is too fat, should realize progress over the last two decades now produces meat that is nearly 25 per cent leaner, says an Alberta Agriculture food specialist.

According to a recent Agriculture Canada study, pork is now one of today's lean meats, says Aileen Whitmore, the department's provincial foods and nutrition specialist in Edmonton.

Whitmore says Canadians are now eating pork that is on average 23 per cent leaner than indicated by the current data published by Health and Welfare Canada. And depending on which cuts are used, Canadian pork has as much as 29 per cent less fat than many U.S. pork cuts.

The specialist says the fat content of pork produced today compares favorably with beef and poultry.

"Pork lovers are now able to enjoy the taste of their favorite meat without second thoughts about the fat content," says Whitmore. "A recently released Agriculture Canada study shows that several retail cuts of pork have a lower fat content than was previously believed.

"All things being equal, the protein content of an animal increases as the fat content decreases which means better value for the consumer's food dollar. This is good news to the pork industry which is interested in meeting the demands of today's consumers."

Whitmore says several factors were involved in reducing the fat content in pork. Changes in the Canadian hog grading system in 1968 encouraged the overall production of leaner pork carcasses. This lead to development of leaner hog breeds, and improved feeding and processing techniques.

The recent Agriculture Canada study of pork fat content, involved seven cuts: shoulder butt roast; the loin tenderloin end roast; leg butt portion roast; loin rib end chops; centre-cut loin roast; picnic shoulder roast; and side spareribs.

(Cont'd)

"When you compare the fat content of the cooked lean portion with comparable U.S. Department of Agriculture data from 1983, Canadian pork is significantly learner," says Whitmore.

The Agriculture Canada study also determined cooking yields which are useful in comparing cost per serving among different cuts. The average number of 90 gram servings of cooked lean meat per kilogram of raw meat, as purchased, varied depending on retail cut.

Whitmore says the shoulder butt roast gave the highest yield, with 5.6 servings, followed by centre-cut loin roast at 5.5 servings, loin tenderloin end roast at 5.2 servings, leg butt portion roast at 5.1 servings, loin rib end chops at five servings, picnic shoulder roast at 4.7 servings and side spareribs at 3.9 servings.

"Consumers can save by comparing the cost per serving on the basis of cooked edible lean meat because the true cost per serving varies when bone, fat and other waste are removed," the specialist says.

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Contact: Aileen Whitmore
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February 29, 1988
For immediate release

Alberta Agriculture assists with farm credit survey

Alberta Agriculture district and regional staff members will be interviewing more than half of the 1,900 Alberta farmers participating in a nation-wide survey defining the financial structure of Canadian farms.

District agriculturists and district home economists will co-ordinate completion of about 1,000 of the Alberta farm survey interviews, while the federal Farm Credit Corporation (FCC) staff and several contract personnel are conducting another 900 interviews.

These 1,900 Alberta farmers represent about 25 per cent of the 8,500 producers from across the country being questioned in the national survey. Alberta Agriculture is one of the provincial departments of agriculture working with FCC, Agriculture Canada and Statistics Canada, on the project.

John Calpas of Lethbridge, co-ordinator of the Alberta portion of the joint study says the survey will provide a profile of the financial situation on Canadian farms which will be useful in planning and policy making.

"The information obtained from the survey will be instrumental in the development of agricultural policies across Canada," says Calpas. "The Farm Credit Corporation conducted similar surveys in 1981 and 1984, but current data is needed to provide a clear picture of financial strengths and weaknesses of Canadian farms.

"In previous surveys, some of the largest and most significant changes occurred in Alberta. The large sample of farms in the 1987 FCC survey will therefore provide especially meaningful information and a comparison of changes over the last three years, which have been a hardship and particularly devastating to the grain sector.

Calpas, who is working on behalf of Alberta Agriculture's statistics branch, encourages all farmers in Alberta who are on the survey list to complete the questionnaire.

(Cont'd)

Alberta Agriculture assists with farm credit survey (cont'd)

"Up-to-date information is vital. In recent years, virtually all sectors of agriculture and all individual farmers have benefited from some public (government) support program," he says. "These programs for farmers must be based on good input and co-operation from farmers."

Calpas says the survey questions focus on the amount of money borrowed last year, capital investment, the size and type of operation, inventory, farm revenue and expenses, and the financial structure of enterprises.

Former British Columbia Agriculture Minister Jim Hewitt, who is chairman of Farm Credit Corporation Canada, and Alberta Agriculture Deputy Minister Ben McEwen, have both emphasized that individual responses to the questionnaire will remain confidential.

"While the sensitive nature of the individual information is acknowledged, individual confidentiality is also assured," says McEwen. "The aggregated information will be invaluable both to the farming industry and to governments in order to provide guidance for future agricultural program and credit policy formulation."

The results of the farm survey will be published in the fall of 1988.

For more information on the project contact either:

Contact: John Calpas
Survey Co-ordinator
Statistics Branch
Alberta Agriculture
Edmonton, Alberta
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- OR -

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Contact: John Calpas
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February 29, 1988
For immediate release

Projects support "conservation pays" message

While there are no patent formulas, farmers need only to experiment to find a conservation program that will protect the soil and hopefully save them money, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Regardless of rumors and conflicting stories that support or condemn the economics of soil conservation, Lorne Owen, regional farm economist in Airdrie, says farmers should try different farming practices for themselves until they find a program that suits them.

He says practical, cost-effective soil conservation programs are as individual as the farmers that use them.

A move toward conservation farming may only involve a small change in a producer's operation, says the specialist, but it could help protect the soil resource and increase farm income. As well, paying attention to crop production details can also save money.

"What one really needs is a conservation program that prevents soil eroison and increases income with little additional risk," he says. "This may sound a bit idealistic but it is possible. Many farmers are currently experimenting with their own conservation projects."

The changes don't have to be as dramatic as switching from summerfallow farming to zero-till, continuous cropping, but measures such as fall weed control, recropping into stubble, and different seeding techniques can produce positive results.

The specialist made his comments following a dozen one-year trial projects involving nine farmers in south-central Alberta. The producers were asked to compare the economics of conventional farming practices with conservation farming practices, and determine which was the most cost effective.

Owens says while a one-year project does not provide conclusive evidence, results showed that two-thirds of the 12 projects made money or roughly broke even.

(Cont'd)

Projects support "conservation pays" message (cont'd)

"The projects making small changes were usually the ones with the best results," he says. "Small changes such as elimination of a tillage operation or the effective use of a herbicide instead of tillage provided obvious cash benefits."

He says a good reminder is that soil conservation is not just zero-till or continuous cropping, but any practice that reduces erosion. Another factor that may play a part in the results of these projects is timing and attention to detail.

An Alberta Agriculture study from a few years ago showed that crop yields are influenced by paying attention to seedbed preparation, the effective application of chemicals, timing of cultivations, and minimizing harvest loses. These practices added little additional cost but did pay dividends.

"When it comes to soil conservation, farmers are caught," says Owen. "It's hard for them to watch good soil being lost, but the dollars have to count each year. Farmers know that someday there is going to be a real cost to soil losses, but higher costs right now and a greater risk of crop losses could put them out of business.

"In a market where large inventories have forced grain prices to a seriously low level, one has to make the best use of every dollar. Any practice that improves your current situation and promotes future well-being should be explored. There are no prescription answers that can be easily applied to every farm. Your small trials carefully monitored and modified can provide you with the best direction."

The specialist says other farmers, researchers, extension agents and conservation associations can provide plenty of ideas and often assistance to run a project.

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February 29, 1988
For immediate release

Land leasing procedures covered in publication

Alberta Agriculture has just released its updated and revised edition of a publication useful in preparing land leasing agreements.

"Leasing Cropland in Alberta" is a 58-page publication covering topics such as leases and the law, leasing agreements, leases and the Income Tax Act, leases and government programs, and alternatives to leases.

Garth Nickorick with the department's farm business management branch in Olds says the publication includes the information needed by landlords and tenants to complete a lease agreement. Methods of rent calculation are provided to determine acceptable cash rent or crop shares.

Sample agreements are provided which may be used as a guide for discussion.

For a copy of "Leasing Cropland in Alberta," contact any Alberta Agriculture district office or Garth Nickorick, Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta TOM 1PO, or call 556-4247.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
556-4247

February 29, 1988
For immediate release

Utilities become farm safety sponsors

TransAlta Utilities and Alberta Power Ltd. have joined Alberta Agriculture as sponsors of a major farm safety program for children.

The two companies will be working with the department to produce the Child's Guide to Farm Safety which is distributed to more than 50,000 elementary school students in the province.

The guide, which has been produced for the past 12 years, is a highly regarded educational tool. It involves students in creative and entertaining activities developed around a farm safety theme.

Through the projects it is hoped the children gain an awareness of playing and working safely.

Solomon Kyeremanteng, manager of the department's farm safety program, in welcoming the new corporate sponsors, says their support will help continue the work and maintain program continuity in Alberta schools.

Company officials are also enthusiastic about being part of the program.

Ken McCready, president and chief operating officer of TransAlta said, "The safety practices of Alberta's farm residents are of mutual concern to Alberta Agriculture and Alberta's investor-owned electric utilities.

Craighton Twa, president of Alberta Power agreed and added, "Both companies have established public safety programs. We are always looking at new and effective ways to reach the public, especially children. Children are precious and their education concerning safe farm practices is crucial.

The officials said they are pleased to be part of "the well established and effective farm safety program for children, developed and implemented each year through the provincial government department."

The companies will be involved in the development of the next issue of the guide to be published in late 1988.

(Cont'd)

Utilities become farm safety sponsors (cont'd)

As TransAlta and Alberta Power join forces on the child's safety guide, a former sponsor of the publication moves into a new area.

Esso Petroleum Canada, which in the past co-sponsored the booklet, will be working with the department in 1988 on several projects involving safe handling and storage of agriculture chemicals.

The energy company will be involved in projects such as production of a safe chemical storage kit; design and production of an activity booklet for children; development of educational materials for community awareness programs on anhydrous ammonia; and development of an information package on farm safety for emergency response groups such as the police, ambulance attendants and hospital workers.

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Contact: Solomon Kyeremanteng
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For immediate release

New publication available on organic soil management

Alberta farmers who crop some of the 2.5 million acres of arable peat soils in the province should obtain a new Alberta Agriculture publication on how to best manage this land for crop production.

Because peat soils often represent only a small portion of the overall seeded area, specialists say farmers don't always provide the right management to get maximum production from these soils.

The fact sheet "Management of Organic Soils" was recently produced by the department to provide landowners with an overview of management practices suited to organic or peat soils, says Rick Sherstabetoff, with the department's soils branch in Edmonton.

The six-page publication covers topics such as characteristics of organic soils, water management, tillage and seedbed preparation, choosing suitable crops, fertilization, and weed and disease control.

Information in the factsheet was obtained from producers currently farming these soils, Alberta Agriculture staff and from research conducted in other prairie provinces.

"It is estimated that peatlands occupy 30 million acres or 20 per cent of the land area in Alberta," says Sherstabetoff. "But only about 2.5 million acres of the total is potentially arable land.

"Organic soils are typically found as small areas or pockets within fields and are managed like adjacent mineral soils. Consequently, the incidence of crop failures and poor quality crops is greater than on the surrounding mineral soils."

The specialist says farmers can employ specific management practices to these organic soil pockets to improve crop production.

The two types of peatland - bog and fen - contain varying amounts of sedge and moss peat.

Bog peatlands which are covered by black spruce, tamarack, labrador tea and contain mostly moss peat, are not recommended for agricultural development.

(Cont'd)

New publication available on organic soil management (cont'd)

Shallow fen peatlands, which are covered by sedge or grass-like vegetation with varying proportions of woody shrubs and willows, are suitable for farming. Deeper fens require more intensive management in the form of elaborate and expensive drainage.

Organic soils are typically low in plant-available phosphorous, potassium and micronutrients such as copper and manganese. Average soil test values of plant-available nitrogren (0-60 cm), phosporous (0-15 cm) and potassium (0-15 cm) are 19, seven and 55 pounds per acre, respectively.

By comparison, nutrient levels in mineral soils are considered adequate when nitrogen (0-60 cm) and phosphorous (0-15 cm) levels range from 50 to 60 pounds per acre, and potassium (0-15 cm) ranges between 250 to 300 pounds per acre.

Soil and plant testing are recommended to identify the type and amounts of nutrients required, says Sherstabetoff.

For a copy of "Management of Organic Soils" (Agdex FS518-12) contact any Alberta Agriculture district office or write Alberta Agriculture, Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

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Contact: Rick Sherstabetoff
427-5373

February 29, 1988
For immediate release

Latest custom livestock feeding/handling rates released

Alberta farmers interested in what it costs to custom feed and handle cattle should obtain results of a recently completed Alberta Agriculture survey.

Conducted in January by Maureen Whitlock of the department's statistics branch, the survey includes rates for custom feeding, livestock hauling, corral cleaning and fencing operations.

Custom feedlot charges for backgrounding calves showed the most common yardage rate was 15 cents per day, feed processing $11 to $15 per tonne, total cost per pound of gain from 35 cents to 50 cents, and death loss from one to 1.5 per cent.

For finishing calves, yardage charges were 12 to 15 cents per day, feed processing at $11 to $15 per tonne, total cost per pound of gain 36 cents to 43 cents, and death loss from 0.75 to 1.50 per cent.

Finishing yearlings had a total cost per pound of gain from 33 cents to 40 cents, with yardage charges from 13 to 15 cents per day, death loss of 0.25 to 0.75 percent, and feed processing charges of $11 to $17 per tonne. Wintering cows was charged at 84 cents to $1.15 per day. This did not include calving out.

Corral cleaning with loader, three spreaders and three or four operators commonly cost from $140 to $180 per hour.

Construction of a three wire fence including only labor and equipment most commonly was quoted at $1,100 to $1,400 per mile.

Livestock hauling charges varied depending on distance. For distance under 50 miles the rates were $3 per loaded mile. For 51 to 100 miles, the rates were $2.50 to $3 per loaded mile.

For a copy of the survey results or more information, contact Garth Nickorick, Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, 556-4247.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
556-4247

February 29, 1988
For immediate release

Improved quality will help Canadian wheat sales

While an enormous world surplus of wheat is the major factor holding prices down, quality may be a feature which helps Canadian farmers sell their product in the international market place.

Alberta Agriculture market analyst Charlie Pearson says with very little milling-quality wheat around the world and Canada producing a relatively good quality wheat crop in 1987, marketing and price prospects have improved.

Pearson says there is still a large carryover or inventory of wheat in the world, and international trade wars are also still a factor, but there is reason for optimism.

"The quality of this year's hard red spring wheat crop was better than last year's crop in spite of a much lower volume of No. 1 Canada Western Red Spring (CWRS) wheat," says Pearson. "Only 19 per cent of this year's hard red spring wheat crop is estimated to have grade No. 1 CWRS, compared to 35 per cent of the 1986.

" However, wheat grading in the two top grades comprised 65 per cent of the prairie crop compared with 56 per cent the previous year. Farm stored stocks of wheat on December 31, 1987 were estimated by Statistics Canada to be 74 per cent 1 and 2 CWRS compared with around 50 per cent in the two previous years. A major characteristic of this year's crop quality-wise is a much lower volume of spring wheats grading Canada Western Feed."

Pearson, in his quarterly market summary, says the improved quality should translate into improved export opportunities and better prices offered producers by the Canadian Wheat Board.

The specialist cites several reasons for improved price prospects.

1. The Canadian Wheat Board will have a much smaller volume of Canada feed wheat to market this year as a result of substantially better quality crop in 1987. World feed wheat prices continue to be low because of a large volume of low quality wheat and large volumes of feed grains.

(Cont'd)

Improved quality will help Canadian wheat sales (cont'd)

2. World supply of high quality milling wheat is smaller which should allow the CWB to maintain their asking prices at a premium to other types of wheat.

3. Current world wheat prices have impoved $10 to $20 (Canadian) per tonne as a result of a slight tightening of world carryover stocks and a decline in the value of the U.S./Canadian dollars relative to other major currencies. World prices for wheat in late February were about $122 (Canadian) a tonne compared to $112 (Canadian) a tonne last November.

4. The initial payment for all grades of wheat were lowered by $20 per tonne last spring. For example, this involved dropping the initial payment of No. 1 CWRS (basis Vancouver/Thunder Bay) from $130 per tonne in the 1986-87 crop year to $110 per tonne in the current crop year.

"Therefore we would expect to see CWB final payments in the $15 to $25 per tonne range for the two top grades of spring wheat in January of 1989," says Pearson.

The specialist says it is harder to predict a final payment for lower grades of wheat. Specifically looking at No. 3 CWRS he expects a final payment in the $5 to $8 per tonne range.

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Contact: Charlie Pearson
427-5386

February 29, 1988
For immediate release

Barley exports down, domestic use up

Canadian barley exports are expected to be down this year as producers appear to be holding out for improved markets, says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

But with large feedgrain supplies and international trade wars keeping world prices low, Charlie Pearson says he doesn't expect the situation to change much in the foreseeable future.

The Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) has said it won't be an aggressive seller of prairie barley if it doesn't have committed prairie barley available for export. Few producers have signed up for CWB contracts and exports for the first six months of the 1987-88 crop year are down about 37 per cent from last year

"Producer barley deliveries during the first 23 weeks of the crop year were 2.12 million tonnes, 1.12 million tonnes less than during the same period in the previous year," says Pearson. "By comparison non-board deliveries were more than 670,000 tonnes, over 50 per cent higher than the previous year."

The analyst says he expects exports this year to be about five million tonnes, down from the 6.7 million tonnes exported in the 1986-87 crop year.

He says there are three major factors affecting barley exports this year.

1. Farmers are reluctant to deliver barley at current price levels. Many farmers are holding barley either in anticipation of better non-board prices in the spring or in hopes of having some of their barley accepted for malt.

2. Reduced export demand for Canadian barley from the Soviet Union. With the USSR producing a large domestic crop of its own, Canadian barley sales to that country for the first five months of the crop year amounted to 200,000 tonnes compared to 1.6 million tonnes during the same period last year.

3. A continuing trade war between the United States and the European Economic Community has resulted in a buyers market for coarse grains.

(Cont'd)

Barley exports down, domestic use up (cont'd)

"There is a possibility of a final payment on barley sold in the 1987-88 crop year," says Pearson. "This final payment will be less than $5 per tonne and will be dependent on the volume of barley shipped through west coast terminals versus east coast grain terminals."

On the home front, domestic barley use is expected to set a new record this year as greater demand from eastern Canada and reduced supplies of feed wheat come into play.

Pearson estimates domestic use will be about 8.3 million tonnes this year.

"Given the current low barley prices, livestock producers can be expected to continue feeding high grain levels," says the specialist. "We expect increased demand from eastern Canada for western barley, as Ontario corn prices increase and with the volume of feed wheat reduced, barley demand has increased."

Canadian barley production in the 1988-89 crop year is expected to be down due to an eight per cent decrease in the acreage to be seeded this spring.

"We expect Canadian farmers will harvest an 11.5 million-acre crop in 1988," he says. "Given average yields this would result in a 12 million tonne Canadian barley crop, compared to 14.4 million tonnes produced in 1987."

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Contact: Charlie Pearson
427-5386

February 29, 1988
For immediate release

Oat prices expected to be "more traditional" in 1988

Western Canada's 1987 Cinderella crop may have been left standing at the alter as 1988 finds oats heading back to its more traditional role...and price range, says a market observer.

After a market fling which peaked in January, Canadian feed oat prices are expected to be more down to earth this year, says Charlie Pearson an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

The 1987 price increases were caused by reduced international supplies of oats, particularly in the United States. A situation that is expected to change this year.

Pearson says western farmers should expect a substantial final payment on oats this year, and notes that markets for top quality milling oats and pony oats should also remain strong.

Canadian oat production for the 1987-88 crop year is estimated at three million tonnes, down slightly from the previous year's 3.3 million tonne crop. Western Canadian and Alberta production were 2.4 million tonnes and 1.2 milion tonnes respectively.

After reaching a high of $74 to $92 per tonne (off-board prices) in January, oat prices declined in February.

Pearson says several new factors will begin to impact the oat market in 1988 beginning with a return to more traditional oat production levels in the United States.

To qualify for U.S. farm assistance programs producers were required to take a certain percentage of their crop acreage out of production. That program caused a reduction in the U.S. oat crop last year.

"However, the United States Department of Agriculture has decreased the acreage reduction to qualify for the U.S. government oat programs from 20 per cent of base acres in 1987, to five per cent in 1988," says Pearson. " We therefore expect an increase in U.S. oat production.

(Cont'd)

Oat prices expected to be "more traditional" in 1988 (cont'd)

"Secondly both Finland and Sweden can be expected to harvest a larger and better quality crop in 1988. And finally, we expect Canadian farmers to increase the number of acres planted to oats given likely improved profitability relative to barley. We estimate Canadian oat production to be 3.2 million tonnes in 1987. Export demand for good quality oats will remain firm."

The specialist says CWB initial oat payments aren't expected to change this year. He says off board prices for oats are likely to be in the $55 to $65 per tonne range which is more competitive with other feed grains.

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Contact: Charlie Pearson
427-5386

EDITOR'S NOTE

On December 16, 1987, Michael Wilson presented a Notice of Ways and Means Motion to amend the Income Tax Act, which contained many of his tax reform proposals of June 18, 1987.

For farmers, the highlight of Wilson's amendments is the retraction of the modified accrual accounting system. Extensive lobbying on the part of farm groups and individuals appears to have had the intended effect and the government has indicated that it no longer intends to proceed with the modified accrual basis accounting for farmers as set out in the White Paper proposals.

The government has instead decided to consult with farm groups on a proposal under which all farmers may continue to account on a cash basis, with special measures that will apply where a cash basis loss is generated.

Although the government has abandoned the modified accrual basis accounting proposal, it has re-introduced a proposal for discussion whereby losses on the cash basis will only be deductible if they exceed the cost or value of inventory on hand at the end of a fiscal year.

Through this approach, the federal government is acknowledging their original objective to limit cash base losses through inventory accumulation without the requirement that the entire agricultural industry file on a modified accrual accounting system.

In order to explain this proposal and other new rules, Merle Good, a farm management economist with Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch in Olds, has prepared three articles.

The first article deals with the $500,000 capital gains exemption, the second article with farm income and losses and the third with the various tax measures affecting farmers.

Tax Reform II - The Sequel

By Merle Good
(Part 3 of a three part series)

VARIOUS TAX MEASURES AFFECTING FARMERS

Five-year Block Average

The Five-Year Block Average Provision will be phased out as presented under the Tax Reform Proposals by 1992. The phase-out period means that farmers can complete any Five-Year Block period started in 1987 or earlier. 1987 is the final year that a five-year block average can be commenced from, therefore making 1991 the last year to block. If an election to Block Average in 1987 is made, this will be the last time the individual will be able to use the provision.

It is very important to understand that the alternative minimum tax (AMT) calculation is not made when a producer elects to file a five-year block average. This may result in a substantial tax saving when property is being transferred or sold at fair market value resulting in a capital gain.

Eligible Capital Property (Quotas)

The taxation treatment of eligible capital property such as quotas remains as proposed by the White Paper. Prior to 1988, one-half of the proceeds of the sale of quota were added to taxable income. In 1988 and subsequent years, the taxable portion of the sale of quota to be added to taxable income will be calculated at three quarters of the disposition proceeds.

The undepreciated balance of quota purchased prior to June 17, 1987 will be adjusted upward by 50 per cent when filing the 1988 return, to allow for this increased taxation upon disposition. In 1988 therefore, the sale of quota will result in a 50 per cent increase in the portion of the sale proceeds that will be added to taxable income.

(Cont'd)

In addition, the entire sale proceeds will be taxable in the year of sale even if the proceeds are not fully realized in that year for quota disposed of after June 17, 1987. The effect of this change to a producer who, for example receives only 1/10th of the proceeds under a ten year sale agreement, is that 100 per cent of the disposition proceeds must be added to income at a 50 per cent rate for 1987 sales and 75 per cent rate for sales in 1988.

Prior to these changes producers were able to use a reserve mechanism that generally spread the taxation liability over the term of the agreement for sale.

Intergenerational farm transfers will now require careful structuring in order to avoid this accelerated taxation.

Furthermore, the depreciation rate of eligible capital property has been reduced to seven per cent from 10 per cent beginning in 1988 and subsequent years to reflect the 50 per cent adjustment increase to the balance of undepreciated eligible capital property owned prior to 1988. Eligible capital property acquired in 1988 and after will be depreciated on 75 per cent of the value of the property.

Home-Office Expenses

For self-employed taxpayers, the present rules allow for the deduction of capital cost allowance, mortgage interest, property taxes, insurance charges, maintenance repairs, utility costs, related to a home office that is used for business purposes. Under the new system, farmers will be allowed the same prorated expenses as long as they meet the following new rules.

a) the space is used exclusively on a regular and continuous basis for the purpose of earning income
b) the expense is limited to the extent of income earned from the business.

(Cont'd)

Automobile Expense Limitations

Passenger Vehicles

A "passenger vehicle" means an automobile which is not primarily used for the purpose of transportation of goods and equipment. In the farm community, a half-ton or 3/4-ton truck will most likely not be classified as a passenger vehicle, whereas a car will be.

The rules state that for a passenger vehicle, the maximum depreciable capital cost will be limited to $20,000 for vehicles purchased after June 17, 1987. Furthermore, the amount of interest that can be deducted shall not exceed $250/month.

Motor Vehicle Expenses

A further restriction exists whereby all types of motor vehicles, including half-tons, farm trucks will have their expenses limited as follows:

a) Fuel, maintenance and repair costs of the year related to the vehicle will be limited to the portion of vehicle use for business.

b) The amount of expenses for fixed costs such as licensing, insurance fees, allowable interest charges and capital cost allowance, will also be prorated, based on a percentage of business use. A further restriction exists however, where business kilometres travelled are less than 24,000 kilometres.

(Cont'd)

The following example illustrates the rules.

A half-ton truck is driven a total of 30,000 kilometres with 20,000 kms being attributable to business use. Assume fixed costs for the year are $7,000. The deduction for fixed expenses would be 20,000 business kms divided by 30,000 total kms x $7,000, which equals $4,666. The new regulations will require a further prorating of the fixed costs however, because the truck was used less than 24,000 kms for business purposes. Therefore, 20,000 business kms divided by 24,000 kms x $4,666 equals $3,888 and this is the amount of fixed costs that can be deducted from income in that year. If the truck had been used for 24,000 business kms, it would have been eligible for a $5,600 deduction (24,000 business kms divided by 30,000 total kms x $7,000 equals $5,600), with no further adjustments being necessary as the 24,000 business kms requirement was made.

It will be important for farmers to keep track of their total kilometres and business use kilometres in reference to their half ton and three-quarter ton trucks and other vehicles, in order to satisfy the requirements of these new regulations.

A vehicle, which is used 100 per cent of the time on business, such as a three-ton truck, will not have the fixed costs further restricted, even if total milage is less than 24,000 kms per year.

The ratio for fixed expenses is as follows:

$$\text{Deduction} = \frac{\text{fixed expenses}}{} \times \frac{\text{business kms}}{\text{total kms}} \times \frac{\text{Business Kms not exceeding 24,000 kms}}{\text{Total Kms not exceeding 24,000 kms}}$$

Optional Value of Livestock (Livestock Inventory Provision)

It appeared under tax reform, this averaging provision would no longer be available for farmers by 1988. With the elimination of the modified accrual accounting system however, the livestock inventory provision will be maintained for 1988 and subsequent taxation years.

(Cont'd)

In fact, it is this provision that will be substantially modified in order to meet the government's objective of restricting farm losses created by inventory purchases. The article entitled "Farm Income and Expenses" deals with this topic in greater detail.

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Contact: Merle Good
556-4237

Agri-News Briefs

PIN DESIGN SOUGHT FOR 4-H FOUNDATION

The Alberta 4-H Foundation is looking for a design for a lapel pin to represent its work. "We're in a lapel pin society," says foundation chairman, Bob Boulton of Lousana. "We'd like to have a pin that 4-H'ers can wear. Something that shows the two main functions of the 4-H foundation...Alberta 4-H Centre at Battle River and Alberta 4-H Scholarships. All 4-H members are invited to submit their ideas for a 4-H foundation pin as soon as possible to the 4-H Centre, Box 550, Edmonton. Foundation officials would like to have a design selected and a pin produced by this summer. For further information contact Bob Boulton at 773-2144.

TWO SEMINARS OFFERED IN LACOMBE

Producers in the northeast agriculture region should plan to attend two one-day seminars in Lacombe in early March dealing with cereal and oilseed production and harvest management. Sponsored by the Alberta Agriculture district office in Lacombe, the cereals and oilseeds production update will be offered March 9 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the agriculture building in Lacombe. Murray McLelland, cereal crop specialist will take a look at which varieties to grow, while Wayne Jackson a plant specialist will discuss fertilizing for maximum economic yield. Doug Walkey will provide a market outlook while Neil Harker of Canada Agriculture will discuss achievements in weed control.
The following day, March 10 specialists will talk about harvest management planning. Robert Borg, an Alberta Agriculture regional engineer and Marshall Eliason will discuss topics such as harvesting and grain handling systems, while a representative from the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI) will talk about combine operation. Each seminar is free and participants are asked to bring a bag lunch. For further information contact Neil Miller or Stuart Tucker in Lacombe at 782-3301 or 342-2813.

(Cont'd)

HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION PLANS ANNUAL MEETING

The Alberta Horticultural Association will hold its annual convention March 25 to 27 at the Grove Motor Inn in Spruce Grove. "Filling the Spaces" is the theme of this year's conference hosted by the Stony Plain Horticultural Society. The 36th annual convention will feature several key speakers on a variety of topics, as well as the AHA annual business meeting. Don Macyk, director of Alberta Agriculture's plant industry division will open the convention March 25 with an overview on the status of horticulture in Alberta. During the March 26 program other speakers will include Lois Hole and Bob Stadnyk discussing "Try Something Different In Perennials"; Eguene Fox, "Lilies, Pumpkins and Growing Things; Maureen Morey, "Fun with Herbs"; Hugh Knowles, "There's More to Groundcovers Than Grass; Brendan Casement, "New Hardy Trees and Shrubs"; and Art Ulmer, "Grafting Demonstrations". The association annual meeting will be held March 27. For further information on the convention contact Dorothy Adamson, in Lacombe at 782-3053.

LETHBRIDGE RETAILER WINS DISPLAY AWARD

The Fresh for Flavor Foundation has honored a Lethbridge grocery retailer as one of the national winners of a fall harvest display competition. Super Sam #1, an independently owned Lethbridge store, was one of nine national winners. Terry Braithwaite, produce manager at the store created the award winning 300 square foot display which featured Alberta vegetables. The display depicted four themes: Halloween, Thanksgiving, a barn scene and a field with a scarecrow. Company officials said produce sales increased 30 per cent during the time the display was up compared to the same period last year without a display. Braithwaite wins a trip for two to Vancouver to attend a national convention, as well as a plaque and $150. The Fresh For Flavor Foundation, based in Ottawa, is involved in promotion of Canadian-grown fruits and vegetables.

(Cont'd)

LETHBRIDGE AGAIN HOSTS AG EXPO

More than 90,000 visitors are expected to attend the annual Ag Expo in Lethbridge which is billed as one of the most extensive agricultural shows in Canada. Running from March 2 to 5, at the Whoop Up Exhibition Park, the show will feature more than 300 exhibits of the latest agricultural products, services, machinery and technology. Sponsored by Alberta Agriculture, Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce and the Lethbridge and District Exhibition, Ag Expo also features the International and Provincial Seed Fair. Linda Barvir, Alberta Agriculture's district home economist in Lethbridge and a member of the Ag Expo organizing committee, says along with the machinery and product displays, several short courses will be offered. This includes: New and Improved Seed Varieties, March 2; What's Coming in Tax Reform, March 3; Marketing Your Own Products Abroad, March 4; and High Fibre, Low Colesterol Diet - Is it For You? March 5. For more information on the show contact Linda Barvir in Lethbridge at 381-5238.

NORTHLANDS WESTERN SET FOR MARCH 23

The 78th annual Northlands Western '88 is gearing up for its four-day run at the Edmonton Northlands exhibition grounds March 23 to 26. Events in this year's show includes The Western Stock Show and sale, Superrodeo, the Western Farm and Ranch Show and the pedigreed seed show. The stock show and sale this year features more than 500 head of livestock including some 358 bulls, 35 cows, 47 boars and 66 bred and open guilts. For more information on the show contact Dave Hutton at 471-7112 in Edmonton.

Lethbridge Processor Receives Federal/Provincial Funding

A Lethbridge processor of french fry potatoes will receive $320,263 in financial assistance thanks to a federal/provincial program for agricultural processing. The announcement of the funding was made February 22, 1988 in conjunction with the official opening of the new facility by Canada Packers Inc. (York Farms Manufacturing).

The announcement was made by Bill McKnight, federal Western Diversification Minister, and by Alberta's Agriculture Minister, Peter Elzinga.

Canada Packers is using the funds to expand that portion of its Lethbridge operation processing french fry potatoes and is adding a "dry fry" line being demanded by segments of the food service trade. Estimated to cost $1.4 million, the plant expansion will enhance the operation's viability while maintaining 15 full-time jobs.

The Agricultural Processing and Marketing Agreement is cost-shared by both governments. It is administered jointly by the federal Department of Regional Industrial Expansion (DRIE) on behalf of the Western Diversification Office and by Alberta Agriculture. The Agreement is subsidiary to the Economic and Regional Development Agreement (ERDA) which provides co-ordination and co-operation between the governments of Alberta and Canada in areas of Alberta's economic development.

-30-

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AGRI-NEWS

APR 21 1988

March 7, 1988

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

March 7, 1988
For immediate release

Information access is greatest challenge to agriculture

Making use of ever-changing, high tech information is the greatest challenge facing the agriculture industry today, say two leading Alberta educators.

Dr. Roy Berg, head of the faculty of agriculture at the University of Alberta in Edmonton and Dr. Dan Cornish president of Olds College say being able to absorb the information produced and having the skills to turn that information into management decisions will be the key to success for farmers and agri-businessmen alike.

The specialists say while the technical information on how to produce more efficient crops and livestock is important, the difference will be made by those who have fine-tuned their farm management skills.

Berg and Cornish made their comments in an Agriculture Week in Alberta interview. The special week, this year being marked March 13 to 19, was first designated in Alberta in 1972 to raise awareness of the value of agriculture to the provincial economy.

Several special acitivities have again been planned throughout the province. Alberta Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga will launch the week March 11 at the 1988 Agriculture Hall of Fame banquet in Calgary.

Commenting on this year's theme "Meeting the Challenges" Berg says today's agriculture students need to know how to gain access to the information and then have the skills to use it.

"We can't teach students to have all the answers," he says. "But we can give them the skills to access and understand the information being produced and use it to make management decisions.

"Only about 20 per cent of our students become farmers," says Berg. "The majority pursue careers as extension specialists, researchers, educators, or join some aspect of agri-business. But whether they are farmers making decisions in the field or working as district agriculturists providing advice to producers, the ability to understand and interpret this information for decision making is vital."

(Cont'd)

Information access is greatest challenge to agriculture (cont'd)

Berg says along with providing skills to use information, educators should also be promoting an "entrepreneurial spirit" within the agriculture industry.

"Not enough emphasis is being placed on educating people to be entrepreneurs," he says. "We need to promote a spirit within people to search out opportunities in agriculture and then go for it.

"These don't necessarily have to be major projects, but we need farmers and agri-businessmen who can identify opportunities for a certain type of product or commodity and then take that risk - accept the challenge - to fill a market niche. I encourage young people to gain experience in as many different work areas as possible and to be thinking and watching for opportunities and meet those challenges."

In his comments, Dr. Dan Cornish, says although he doesn't diminish the value of technical production information, both young and old, new and established farmers, will have to develop the ability to handle and process information needed to make day to day farm business management decisions.

"Starting now and increasing over the next few years, management skills that rely on computers and electronic databases will be fundamental to the success of every farming operation," says Cornish. "Some may see that as unrealistic, but in order to access market information, to be aware of changes in technology, and current with the latest information on bio-technical research, producers will have to rely on electronic communication."

Cornish, says student surveys have shown their top three learning priorities are improved writing and communication skills; improved farm management skills; and improved technical skills.

He says while college students can rely on two years of classroom studies, there is nothing stopping established farmers from learning new skills as well.

(Cont'd)

Information access is greatest challenge to agriculture (cont'd)

"For the farmers who have been out of school for a few years and feel overcome by this new technology and need for management skills, I say whoever said you could stop learning. Perhaps they won't have the opportunity to go back to school for a whole semester, but we along with other agencies offer a variety of short courses over a week or two weeks or even homestudy, that can improve their management skills."

Cornish says another area of challenge for the industry is to improve public awareness of agriculture. He says a recent study shows people equate agriculture with farming and don't understand the agri-business component.

"The public has a very narrow view of agriculture. They don't realize that for every farmer there are about 20 other people employed in providing some aspect of agri-business support. This is a significant multiplier affect people don't appreciate."

The college head says the agriculture industry has changed dramatically in the last few years and will continue with dramatic changes for the foreseeable future.

This pace puts increased emphasis on farmers to treat their operations as businesses.

Cornish quoted a recent provincial government study which he says appropriately reflects the situation.

"If we treat farming like a business, it will result in a pleasant way of life. If we treat farming as a way of life, it will be a costly business."

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Contact: Roy Berg 432-4931
Dan Cornish 556-8281

Flaxseed production declines

Canadian flaxseed prices are expected to follow the same trend as other oilseed crops in 1988, although demand for the industrial oil product is declining, says an Alberta Agriculture market analyst.

With about 70,000 acres in Alberta seeded to flax in 1987, it isn't one of the bigger cash crops for producers here, says Charlie Pearson. And with current market conditions, farmers looking to grow an oilseed usually find better returns from canola.

In his latest quarterly review of grain and oilseed markets, Pearson says Canadian flaxseed production is forecast at about 788,000 tonnes for the 1987 crop year, down about 23.3 per cent from the 1986 crop of 1.03 million tonnes. This follows a world trend which shows 1987 production down about 11 per cent. The 1988 forecasts are not available.

"This decrease in production is the result of both reductions in yield and acreage," he says. "The quality of this year's crop is good with 87 per cent of the crop grading 1 CW. The production combined with a carryin of 455,000 tonnes results in total available supplies of 1.24 million tonnes."

Alberta's 1987 production of 41,000 tonnes amounts to about five per cent of the Canadian flaxseed production. Manitoba produced about 429,000 tonnes of flaxseed last year, while Saskatchewan produced about 318,000 tonnes.

Flaxseed exports were down about 3.5 per cent to 345,000 tonnes in 1987 and Pearson expects a similar situation for 1988.

"Flaxseed prices have followed the overall pattern of oilseed prices over the past quarter," he says. "Winnipeg flaxseed futures prices have increased from $211 to $232 per tonne for the nearby contract in October to $234 to $253 per tonne for the March contract in January. Elevator bids for flaxseed increased from a range of $151 to $171 per tonne in October to bids in the range of $181 to $202 per tonne in January."

For more information on flaxseed contact Charlie Pearson in Edmonton at 427-5386.

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Contact: Charlie Pearson
427-5386

March 7, 1988
For immediate release

Beef cow owners urged to enroll in price support program

Alberta farmers who don't like to ride the cattle market roller-coaster should register by mid-April for a stabilization program designed to take some of the unpleasant surprises out of livestock prices.

An Alberta Agriculture spokesman in Edmonton says any beef cow owner who hasn't already enrolled in the National Tripartite Cow-Calf Stabilization Program should sign up before April 15.

The insurance-type program doesn't guarantee farmers a profit, says Wayne Dundas, but it is intended to provide a cushion against extreme price swings. Rather than producers coping with calf prices which over a few years could range from record highs to record lows, the plan is designed to "kick in" during market downturns to provide a "stabilizing" affect.

The cow-calf program is one of three price-stabilization programs designed for the beef industry. The cow-calf program applies to any commerical or purebred beef operators, owning any size herd of breeding beef cows.

Dundas says with the stabilization program requiring a phase-in period to get full benefits, enrolling in 1988 should put participants on line to receive maximum payouts when they are most likely to be needed.

"We are not creating a gloomy forecast simply to promote participation in the program," says Dundas. "But all indications are, and I think most people agree, that cattle prices are cyclical. We've had a couple of good years of calf prices and probably will have two or three more. But it looks as though by 1990 and 1991 market prices could change dramatically.

"Producers who register this spring will be in a position to receive full payout benefits at a time when the market could drop."

The national tripartite stablization program, which operates similar to the Western Grain Stabilization Program, was created in 1986. Tripartite refers to the three parties who equally share the annual premium costs...the farmers, the provincial government and the federal government.

(Cont'd)

Dundas, a technical specialist with the program, says producers who register this spring will immediately be eligible for partial payments, and be on line to qualify by 1991 for 100 per cent of any funds paid out.

"Farmers who didn't register when the program was introduced in 1986 are subject to late-entry rules," says Dundas. "The first year of enrollment producers will receive 25 per cent of any payments made to farmers by the program. The second year they will receive 50 per cent of any payments. The third year 75 per cent of payments and the fourth and subsequent years 100 per cent of any payments."

A national committee consisting of farmers and representatives of both levels of government manages the stablization fund. Payouts are made to producers if the national average calf market price for the current year falls below the support price level.

The national average price is calculated on current calf prices, while the support price level is based on the past 10-year market price average which is adjusted for inflation.

The program spokesman estimates the 6,500 Alberta beef cow owners now enrolled with the National Tripartite Cow-Calf Stabilization Program hold about 400,000 head of cows in the province.

To be eligible for the program, a farmer must be a permanent Canadian resident and a beef cow owner. The program spokesman says after initial enrollment, the annual registration is the only paperwork the farmer has to worry about. Participating producers must include their entire beef cow herd in the program.

Dundas says contrary to rumors a farmer does not have to report how he disposes of his calves to the program.

"There has been a misconception that farmers signing up for the program must sell their calves in the fall, or report when they are sold," says Dundas. "But this isn't the case. Producers can sell their calves in the fall, background them, or finish them, or do whatever they like. It has no bearing on the program or any benefits paid."

For more information on the program contact the stabilization program office in Edmonton at 422-0137 or use the toll-free number 1-800-232-9479.

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Contact: Wayne Dundas
422-0137

March 7, 1988
For immediate release

Last call for Farming for the Future conference registration

Alberta farmers and food processors interested in the latest agricultural research work are still able to attend the 1988 Farming for the Future Conference in Calgary in mid-March.

Conference organizers says there is still some registration room available for anyone wanting to participate in the bi-annual conference on agricultural research, March 17 and 18 at the Marlborough Inn.

Farming for the Future is a multi-million dollar research project funded by the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund and administered by Alberta Agriculture. The program supports both academic as well as practical research projects of value to farmers and the food processing industry.

Since Farming for the Future began, 461 research projects have been awarded funds totalling $39.6 million and 467 on-farm demonstrations have been awarded $2 million. More than 300 scientists and 400 producers have participated in the program. As well, an estimated 150 new scientists have been trained through research projects supported at universities.

Dr. Ralph Christian, executive director of Alberta Agriculture's research division, says Farming for the Future projects have made a significant impact on the industry.

"Advances from Farming for the Future projects, range from better strains of grains and honey bees to improved agronomic procedures more effective livestock management techniques and novel food products," says Christian. "The benefits from Farming for the Future's investment have indeed been far reaching.

"This conference is intended to strengthen the ongoing two-way flow of information from research to producer and from producer to researcher. We believe that doing research is important; equally important is getting the results of research out into the hands of farmers, ranchers and food processors who put it to practical use."

(Cont'd)

Last call for Farming for the Future conference registration (cont'd)

The 1988 conference gets underway March 17 with late afternoon registration. March 18 the conference features several specialists who will review research developments ranging from improving sow reproductive efficiency and "designer canola", to fertilizing irrigated crops and finding new uses for Alberta grains.

For more information or to register contact Sharon Abbott, at 427-1956 in Edmonton.

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Contact: Sharon Abbott
427-1956

March 7, 1988
For immediate release

New district home economist named in Claresholm

A University of Alberta graduate who was raised in the farming community around Tilley, Alberta has been named the new district home economist in Claresholm.

Christine Cook, who was born in Brooks and raised on the family farm at Tilley, has taken over the Alberta Agriculture post in Claresholm following the resignation in 1987 of Jan Williams.

In 1986 Cook had worked about eight months in the Claresholm office on a temporary basis.

Her appointment was announced by Louise Broderson, the department's regional home economist in Lethbridge.

Cook grew up on the family's alfalfa seed farm which also provided custom pollinating with leafcutter bees. She was a 4-H club member for eight years, belonging to both the Tilley Multi-Project Club and Tilley Beef Club.

She graduated from the U of A in 1986 with a bachelor of science degree in home economics, specializing in family studies.

Her experience with Alberta Agriculture includes serving as a summer assistant in Red Deer in 1984, working as a practicum student in Stony Plain in the winter of 1986, and serving as a temporary district home economist in Claresholm in 1986 and in Airdrie from January to September of 1987.

"I am very pleased to be back serving the Municipal District of Willow Creek," says Cook. "I will be serving the MD by providing home economics related programs to the public. I will be providing extension services in areas such as farm financial management, record keeping, nutrition and 4-H development to name a few. I am looking forward to meeting more people in the district."

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Contact: Christine Cook
625-3301

For immediate release

Good markets expected for canola

With world oilseed consumption expected to outstrip production for the second consecutive year, Canadian canola growers shouldn't have any trouble selling their 1988 crop, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Market Analyst Charlie Pearson, in his quarterly report on the grains and oilseed industry, says world oilseed production last year reached about 200 million tonnes, while consumption was pegged at about 202 million tonnes.

He says the demand has reduced world oilseed stocks to about 22.9 million tonnes, down from the carryover of 24.4 million tonnes last year and a record 28.3 million tonne carryover in 1986.

Canadian producers encouraged by the market situation are expected to increase their seeded acreage by 10 to 15 per cent this year.

However, Pearson says it is doubtful the 7.6 million acres to be planted this spring will produce the record 25-plus bushel per acre crop of the last two years. Canadian canola production for the 1988-89 crop year is expected to be about 3.8 to 4 million bushels.

"We expect canola prices to remain very volatile over the coming summer as markets react to the U.S. soybean crop progress very directly," he says. "Although there has been recent talk that there would be changes to the U.S. Farm Bill to allow more soybean acres to be planted on set-aside acres, it would appear this is not likely. We expect a relatively small increase in U.S. soybean production in the coming year."

The specialist expects Alberta elevator crusher bids for canola to be in the $220 to $250 per tonne range this fall.

"I encourage producers to lock in a price for a portion of their 1988 crop at current price levels," he says. "However, I suggest they not hedge more than 25 per cent of the crop at this point, as this market will be very sensitive to weather-related crop production problems in South America this spring and in the United States over the coming summer."

For more information or a copy of the oilseed market outlook, contact Charlie Pearson at 427-5386.

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Contact: Charlie Pearson
427-5386

March 7, 1988

For immediate release

Editor's Note

Hanna-area farmer Norman Storch has learned to adapt his farming practices to maximize soil and water conservation. A leading industry spokesman, Storch was this year named one of Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers for his farm management ability and commitment to improving agriculture technology. Storch operates a broiler hatching egg operation along with a 1,600 acre grain and cattle farm about 25 miles north of Hanna. He started out in the poultry business in 1973 and expanded his operation in 1976. He prepared this column to support the efforts of National Soil Conservation Week, April 11 to 17, 1988.

Small management changes can produce big results

By NORMAN STORCH

Since the virgin soil of the Canadian prairies was first broken in the early 1900s the productive capabilities of that soil have continued to decline.

The very nature of farming requires that this occur. The farmer must remove nutrients from the soil to produce food for the hungry world. In less than a century of cultivation nearly one-half of the organic matter has been lost from these fragile soils.

This loss represents a significant cost to the farmer as well as society as a whole. The cost to the farmer is direct. A good seedbed is more difficult to prepare. Germination is often affected by crusting or pooling after a rain. The soil is more susceptible to erosion from wind and water.

The cost to society is less direct but every bit as real. If the productive ability of a soil continues to decline that soil is less able to support a viable agricultural operation. Agriculture is the mainstay of the rural economy. Any decline in the farm income represents a decline in the agricultural service industry.

The productive value of our soils will continue to decline until we reach a level of management that creates an equilibrium between what we take out of the soil and what we put back in.

(Cont'd)

Gains need not be large. As an example, if the average farmer could cultivate one less time per crop the soil would be better covered, better protected, and better saved.

The loss of organic matter and soil degradation is a condition that we can do something about. It simply takes a committment to the conservation ethic. That ethic need not cost. There are gains to be had by following the ethic. These gains can be both practical and personal.

The most obvious returns come in the form of greater productivity from a better soil. The personal satisfaction that comes from a farmer knowing that he is doing his part to maintain the soils that have been entrusted to him is really what farming is all about.

Future generations are depending on us to take the proper initiative NOW!!

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Contact: John Hermans
Alberta Agriculture
Conservation and Development Branch
422-4385

March 7, 1988
For immediate release

Not much of a winter

Alberta's weather seems to have gone from late fall to early spring with a brief few weeks of winter in between, says the agricultural weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

The average temperatures for February were more typical of the normal values for March, says Peter Dzikowski, with the conservation and development branch in Edmonton.

Average temperatures were all above normal but varied widely with -16.4 Celsius (C) reported for High Level, 2.1 C warmer than the long-term normal of -18.5 C; Lloydminster reported -10.3 C, which was 2.9 C warmer than normal; and Calgary had an average temperature for February of -2.8 C, which was 4.5 C warmer than the normal value of -7.3 C.

The specialist says February began very cold with minimum temperatures dropping to the minus 30s in northern and central Alberta and to the minus 20s in southern Alberta.

But by the second week of the month, daytime maximums were above freezing throughout most of Alberta. Aside from a couple of cold days, daytime temperatures were near or above zero degrees Celsius most of the latter part of February. The warm weather caused a rapid loss of what little snow cover there was over most of Alberta.

"By the end of February, the lack of snowcover and dry surface soils told the story of below normal precipitation through the fall and the early winter months," says Dzikowski. "There is much concern about low soil moisture levels, especially in those areas where soils are dry to a depth of about a metre. In these areas farmers will be very dependent on near or above normal precipitation and evenly distributed, timely precipitation throughout the spring and summer."

He says the low soil moisture levels mean there is no buffer capacity to withstand a period of dry weather, and also makes seed germination completely dependent on timely rainfall.

(Cont'd)

Not much of a winter (cont'd)

However, on a positive note, Dzikowski says the winter months are typically the driest. Precipitation amounts normally increase through April and May to the highest values in June, July and August when crops really need the water.

Snowfall amounts in February ranged from a high of 39.3 centimetres (CM) at Whitecourt, 63 per cent above the normal amount of 24.0 cm, to a low of 4.9 cm at Calgary, only 31 per cent of the normal 15.5 cm.

Most places in Alberta reported 10 to 20 cm of snow which was below or near normal for the month.

For more information contact Peter Dzikowski at 422-4385 in Edmonton.

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Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

TREE NURSERY HAS A NEW NUMBER

The Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in northeast Edmonton is now operating with new telephone numbers. The main switchboard number is 472-6043 while the HORTLINE has changed to 472-6049. The numbers went into effect March 6.

AGRICULTURE PART OF THE CLASSROOM

An army of volunteers from the agriculture community are preparing to visit more than 540 rural and urban classrooms throughout the province during Agriculture Week in Alberta March 14 to 18. For the third consecutive year, five organizations have worked together to develop a Classroom Agriculture Program (CAP) to familiarize students with one of Alberta's largest industries. The five organizations are the Alberta Cattle Commission, Agaware, Alberta Women in Support of Agriculture, Alberta's Women's Institute, the Beef Education Association and the Beef Information Centre. Spokesman Glenn Logan of Lomond, says the program is designed to have people from the agriculture industry share their first hand experience with students. Speakers will be talking with Grade 4 students this year and plans are to offer a new program for Grades 4 to 6 students in 1989. For more information contact Glenn Logan at 792-3696 or Joanne Lemke at 291-4800.

SUMMER FIELD DAY FOR VEGETABLE GROWERS PLANNED

While it's still a few months away Alberta vegetable growers are advised a field day is being planned for them at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center at Brooks in late July. Alberta producers will be joined by representatives of marketing agencies and university and government research and extension personnel from Saskatchewan and Manitoba. There will be tours of research trials plus equipment demonstrations of interest to market garden and commercial vegetable growers. There will also be tours of area farms. The field day is planned for July 25.

(Cont'd)

HORSE CARE WORKSHOPS PLANNED AT OLDS

Horse Hoof Care and Trimming, and Learn to Horsepack the High Country, are two of the many short courses being offered to horseowners by Olds College this spring. The three-day hoof care course is being offered at three separate times in March, April and May. The $120 course will teach the basics of hoof care and proper trimming methods as well as teach participants how to treat minor hoof problems and recognize major ones. The sessions will run March 18 to 20, April 22 to 24 and May 6 to 8. The six-day horsepacking course is designed as a hands-on workshop providing practical training in proper horsepacking techniques and care of related equipment. The course covers everything from the type of horses used and kinds of equipment, to proper saddling and packing oddball loads. This $255 course runs from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 25 to 30. For more information on either courses contact Olds College at 556-8344.

LOVE THEM CRUCIFEROUS VEGETABLES

The next time you're hanging around the produce section at the grocery store and someone strikes up a conversation about "cruciferous" vegetables don't hesitate to get involved. Suzanne Tenold, Alberta Agriculture's regional food and nutrition specialist in Airdrie, says the title is an extraordinary term for some ordinary vegetables. "Cruciferae is the family name for plants of the genus Brassica," says Tenold in the latest Food and Nutrition Matters newsletter. "They were named for their cross-shaped flowers, the four petals of which are arranged in opposite pairs. Familiar cruciferous vegetables include brussel sprouts, rutabaga, turnip, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi and mustard." For a copy of the newsletter contact Tenold in Airdrie at 948-8511.

VEGETABLE GROWERS INVITED TO MARKETING SEMINAR

Alberta vegetable growers are urged to attend a one-day seminar on marketing March 21 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer. Sponsored by Alberta Agriculture the seminar will provide four speakers on topics including the frustration of a new grower trying to market wholesale; packaging and grade standards; grants, loans and other forms of assistance; and pricing policy, market strategies and promotions. There will also be a panel discussion by several produce wholesale buyers. For more information or to register phone 362-3391 in Brooks or 472-6043 in Edmonton.

(Cont'd)

TEST WATER SOURCES ONCE A YEAR

Although the well and dugout water may look okay, a specialist with Agriculture Canada suggests rural landowners have their water sources tested once a year to make sure it's safe. Dr. G.J. Beke, a hydrologist with the Lethbridge Research Station, says water quality conditions can change without the landowner being aware. "That clear, cool water from your well may not be as good as it looks," he says. "It may have tested out as good quality water some time ago, but how much time has elapsed since the last analysis? The quality of dugout and well water can change over time. Studies at the Lethbridge Research Station indicate that water quality changes more frequently in rainfed dugouts than in wells. These fluctuations in quality tend to be small and usually do not cause a change in the rating of its use. But for safety reasons, it is advisable to test the water once a year." For more information contact Dr. Beke at 327-4561.

NATURAL FAT SUBSTITUTE NOT AVAILABLE YET

Calorie watchers waiting for the new all-natural fat substitute which is suppose to deliver all the flavor with a fraction of the calories, probably won't see it available in Canada for at least two years, says an Alberta Agriculture regional food and nutrition specialist. Suzanne Tenold in Airdrie, in the latest Food and Nutrition Matters newsletter says since "Simplesse" does not need regulatory approval in the U.S., products using it could be available on the American market within 18 months. In Canada, however, a two year wait can be expected. Developed by the NutraSweet Co. the fat substitute is made of ground protein from fresh egg whites or milk. While the product can copy the smoothness of fat in uncooked items such as ice cream, cream cheese and salad dressing, Tenold says it is not an acceptable substitute for fat used for frying or baking. The product is said to have caloric reductions from 28 per cent for yogurt to 54 per cent for premium ice cream and 78 per cent for butter. For a copy of the Food and Nutrition Matters newsletter contact Tenold at 948-8511.

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APR - 5 1988

AGRI-NEWS

March 14, 1988

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

March 14, 1988
For immediate release

1987 farmland values show further decline

Alberta's agricultural land values dropped for the fourth consecutive year in 1987 reflecting an industry-wide uncertainty over grain markets.

The provincial average value of an acre of farmland was down about 5.2 per cent in 1987 compared to 1986, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist in Edmonton.

"Last year's prices are maintaining a downward trend that began in 1984," says Julie Egglestone, an economist with the production and resource economics branch.

"Although there are many variables influencing farmland real estate values, the greatest impact is due to the state of the worldwide agriculture economy."

The 1987 provincial average for an acre of farmland was $351 compared to $370 in 1986. While prices were down the number of acres transferred in real estate transactions over the year increased by about 6.1 per cent.

In her fourth quarter report on agriculture real estate, Egglestone says 961,843 acres changed hands in 1987 compared to 906,592 acres in 1986.

Looking at last year's seasonal swings in agriculture real estate prices, land values were highest at the end of the year.

The year began with a per acre provincial average of $348 in the first quarter. The average moved up to about $352 per acre in the second quarter, dropped to $340 per acre in the third quarter and increased by about 5.4 per cent to $359 per acre in the fourth quarter.

As well the number of acres transferred or sold over the year also had seasonal changes. Some 265,739 acres were transferred in the first quarter of 1987, dropping slightly to 261,070 acres in the second quarter, declining further to 182,483 acres in the third quarter and increasing to 253,253 acres in the fourth quarter.

(Cont'd)

1987 farmland values show further decline (cont'd)

The farmland values used in the report are derived from actual real estate transactions in the 65 counties, municipal districts and improvement districts in Alberta. Only transactions of 60 acres or more are included in the report and land sales immediate to major centres such as Calgary and Edmonton are not used.

Egglestone says figures for any area are to be regarded as "benchmarks". They represent sale averages within a rural municipality and can vary widely depending on location and number of acres sold during each reporting period.

"The price per acre average is only an average," she says. "It doesn't necessarily mean a person can go out today and find land at that particular price, but it is an indicator."

Looking at just the fourth quarter figures for 1987, some of the highest average land values were in southern and south-central Alberta. As an example, the counties of Newell, Lethbridge, and Red Deer all had average values of between $600 and $700 per acre.

Following close behind, the counties of Mountain View, Strathcona, and Leduc, and the Municipal Districts of Cardston and Sturgeon had average land values between $500 and $600 an acre.

The counties of Warner, Lacombe, Wheatland, Camrose and Parkland and the municipal districts of Cypress, Pincher Creek, Taber, Kneehill, and Clearwater had price averages in the $400 to $500 range.

Acreage values for most of the remaining municipalities ranged both above and below the provincial fourth quarter average of $359 per acre.

For more information on quarterly real estate figures contact Julie Egglestone in Edmonton at 427-4026.

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Contact: Julie Egglestone
427-4026

March 14, 1988
For immediate release

Urban schools enthusiastic about outreach program

With still three months of its mandate to go, an Alberta Agriculture education program designed to bring a message about the value of agriculture to urban teachers and students has already passed its objective.

Since its January launching the Urban Agriculture Outreach Program has been scheduled to make about 700 presentations in more than 200 schools in Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer and Lethbridge.

In the three northern centres the program is already heavily booked into May and June and organizers expect any open dates will go quickly. Although it has just been launched in Lethbridge the program is also in demand.

Program officials who had hoped to make 600 presentations in this school year say they expect to pass that goal by at least 200 bookings.

The Urban Agriculture Outreach Program is part of the comprehensive "Agriculture in the Classroom" program developed by Alberta Agriculture. Its overall objective is to raise awareness among urban school children of the value and role of agriculture in daily living.

The outreach program involves teams of trained representatives being invited by urban schools to make classroom presentations at the primary, elementary and junior high level.

Along with delivering a message to students, the presentation also acts as an in-class workshop for teachers, giving them a chance to see how the "Agriculture in the Classroom" material can be used in future classroom studies.

"A dual objective of this program is to show Alberta teachers how this educational material can be used in the classroom," says Betty Gabert, program co-ordinator with the department's rural education branch in Edmonton.

(Cont'd)

Urban schools enthusiastic about outreach program (cont'd)

"Rather than have separate workshops just for teachers, we felt by going into the school and actually making presentations to a class, the teachers will get a better understanding of how the material works. They will then be able to include the "Agriculture in the Classroom" material in their future course planning."

Up to late February the outreach program was booked to make 332 presentations in 104 Edmonton schools, 267 presentations in 80 Calgary schools and 70 presentations in 18 Red Deer schools. After just getting underway in Lethbridge, eight presentations in four schools had already been scheduled.

And what was the reaction of teachers to the program? Evaluation sheets completed following the presentations, provided positive comments.

"I feel this type of program is really needed by our city children and I would like to express my appreciation for it," says a teacher from Fairview School in Calgary. Another comment from Valley View School in Calgary: "We loved the whole works."

"I liked the fact that children learned basic things about agriculture in a concise pleasant way," wrote a teacher from Westbrook School in Edmonton, while another at Clara Tynes School in Edmonton said, "The children really enjoyed the game situation. The program provided for various learning styles."

Comments from two schools in Red Deer were: "Keep up the good effort and keep teachers informed of your programs - thanks," from St. Teresa of Avila School, and "I especially liked the opportunity for the children to participate," from Annie L. Gaetz School.

For more information on the Agriculture Outreach Program contact program supervisor Lynn Fraser or Betty Gabert in Edmonton at 427-2402. Call toll-free by calling the Calgary R.I.T.E. operator at 297-6161, the Red Deer R.I.T.E. operator at 340-5111 or the Lethbridge R.I.T.E. operator at 381-5151 and ask for the Edmonton number.

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Contact: Betty Gabert
427-2402

March 14, 1988
For immediate release

Date changed for annual Brooks center field day

The annual field day at Alberta Agriculture's centre in Brooks will be held one week earlier this year to be more convenient for the public as well as to accommodate workload at the center.

The 26th annual open house at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center (ASCHRC) will be held August 19 this year, the third Friday of August, instead of the traditional last Friday of the month.

Tom Krahn, center director says the date change is made for several reasons.

The earlier field day should allow visitors to see research plots and display grounds closer to their peak performance. The date should also be ahead of any frost which in some previous field days had damaged the annual flowers.

As well, moving the field day will also improve the center's operative efficiency. In the past late August plot harvesting was often suspended to allow staff to take care of field day preparations.

The August 19 date also coincides with the 1988 Brooks and District Agricultural Society Fair, says Krahn. This would allow out-of-town visitors an opportunity to attend both events.

For more information on field day activities write the ASCHRC, Bag Service 200, Brooks, Alberta, TOJ 0J0.

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Contact: Tom Krahn or Joyce Clark
362-3391

March 14, 1988
For immediate release

Beef herd management guide is a best seller

About 2,400 farmers and other cattle industry specialists have sought out Alberta Agriculture's up-to-date Beef Herd Management Reference Guide which was released just four months ago.

A second printing has been ordered to meet the high demand for the 800-page home study course which covers all management aspects of a cow-calf operation from genetics and grazing rotations to handling facilities and financing.

Pat Davidson, co-ordinator of the department's home study program says she is pleased with the response to the recently revised guide.

"Initially we had printed 2,000 copies of the binder, which we expected would last about two years," she says. "And they all went in three months. We have now ordered 400 more copies and they should be available for distribution by mid-March."

The co-ordinator says requests for the beef herd management guides have come from across Canada and as far away as New York. However, she says most requests for the $35 reference binder have come from farmers, agriculture instructors, consultants and agri-businesses in Alberta.

There are three key sections in the reference guide and the bulk of information represents background material and factsheets which provide details on beef herd production and management.

There are more than 175 factsheets in the guide which provide detailed information on genetics, nutrition, reproduction, disease and pest control, grazing management, marketing, handling and feeding facilities and finance.

It is organized so a producer can easily look up detailed information on a specific topic.

Beef herd management guide is a best seller (cont'd)

The complete study guides reflects an integrated approach to beef herd management. Specialists with the department's beef cattle and sheep branch encourage producers to look at the management of the overall beef operation in reaching objectives and production efficiency.

For more information or an application form for the beef herd management study guide contact any Alberta Agriculture district office or Pat Davidson at Home Study Office, Alberta Agriculture, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6, or phone 427-2404.

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Contact: Pat Davidson
427-2404

March 14, 1988
For immediate release

Solutions to resource use conflicts explored

A two-day conference in Edmonton in mid-April will study new and compatible ways of managing water, soil resources and wildlife habitat to the benefit of all resource users.

"Wetlands, Wildlife and Agriculture" is the theme of the April 19 and 20 conference sponsored by the Alberta chapters of the Canadian Water Resources Association and the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

Several noted speakers ranging from government resource managers, to association spokesmen, university professors and private industry representatives will tackle several key issues.

"The conference will focus on seeking innovative and integrated solutions to the problems of conserving soil and water resources while maintaining optimum agricultural production and wildlife habitat," says David Neilson, a conference organizer.

"Invited speakers will cover topics including water resources planning, watershed hydrology, farmer perspectives, on-farm water management, soil conservation, and wildlife conservation. The legal aspects of the question as well as the experiences of other jurisdictions will also be discussed."

The conference will be held at the Edmonton Inn, in Edmonton, running from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 19, and 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon April 20. Conference registration is open to the public.

For more information or registration forms contact Lynne Kemper, Alberta Water Resources Commission, #910, 10045 - 111 Street, Edmonton, T5K 2M5 (Call 422-4232) or David Neilson, Conservation and Development Branch, Alberta Agriculture, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6 (Call 422-4385).

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Contact: David Neilson
422-4385

March 14, 1988
For immediate release

Fruit Growers Society annual meeting

Society members as well as the general public are invited to attend the Fruit Growers Society of Alberta annual meeting, March 26 at the Northlands Agricom, Saloon #2.

Following registration at 9:30, the society business meeting will begin at 10 a.m. and run until noon.

The luncheon guest speaker is Len Pearson of Pearson's Berry Farm who will discuss his saskatoon berry marketing experiences.

The afternoon will get underway with Lloyd Hausher of Alberta Agriculture discussing highlights of a saskatoon survey and a recent saskatoon industry meeting he attended.

The remainder of the afternoon will feature a Pfizer Chemical representative discussing the use of Linuron and Casoron, followed by John Stevens, a Hoechst Chemical representative, discussing the use of Trifluralin and Decis.

Lunch will be provided at a cost of $5 and those planning to attend are asked to advise organizers so that meal requirements can be met.

For further information or to register contract the Fruit Growers Society of Alberta, Box 861, Beaverlodge, TOH OCO. Or call Karen Baldwin, (days) at Brooks, 362-3391; or Joe Uhryn, (evenings) at Spruce Grove, 962-5824; or Jim Drabble, (evenings) at Beaverlodge, 354-8530. Memberships are available.

Contact: Jim Drabble
354-8530

EDITOR'S NOTE

Following is a two-part feature dealing with soil salinity on irrigated farmland in Alberta. While much has been said about dryland salinity problems, specialists have also been working to control the smaller but not the less serious problem of soil salinity caused by or magnified by irrigation practices.

Brent Patterson, an Alberta Agriculture specialist in Lethbridge says progress has been made to reduce the problem.

This two-part feature describes the scope and cause of the problem as well as control measures. The material can be used either as a two-part series or as two separate articles.

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

March 14, 1988
For immediate release

Measures help control soil salinity under irrigation

Less than 10 per cent of the 2.5 million acres of Alberta farmland affected by soil salinity is under irrigation farming practices say specialists with Alberta Agriculture.

And they estimate about half of that 200,000 acres of the irrigated farmland is considered to be seriously affected by salinity.

Although there are no quick solutions to stop the spread of soil salinity, the specialists say progress is being made on several fronts to control and reverse the effects of the problem.

By improving the water-holding ability of the water distribution canals; providing proper evaluation of new irrigated lands; installing subsurface field drainage systems; and implementing different farming practices, experts know the problem is in retreat.

Alberta Agriculture, in co-operation with the irrigation districts, has invested $237 million from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund over the past 11 years to rebuild, rehabilitate and enlarge the irrigation canals and lateral distribution systems and to improve water management control capabilities.

This has been matched by an equal investment by the irrigation farmers for on-farm system improvements. Over the same 11-year-period Alberta Environment has invested $360 million of Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund capital into the headworks and main irrigation canals improvement program, which has significantly reduced seepage associated with the main canals.

Brent Paterson, head of Alberta Agriculture's land evaluation and reclamation branch in Lethbridge, says efforts made in just this decade are already providing dramatic, positive results.

(Cont'd)

Measures help control soil salinity under irrigation (cont'd)

Soil salinity is a buildup or concentration of natural mineral salts in the soil profile. For the most part, salinity is a naturally occurring problem, however farming practices on susceptible soils have served to accentuate the problem on the prairies.

Farming methods such as summerfallow and replacing native grasses with grains and oilseeds which generally use less water, has lead to a gradual rise in the water table and increased soil salinity in the dryland farming areas. Seepage from the water distribution system which also adds to the water table, has been cited as the main culprit in increasing salinity on irrigated farmland.

But regardless of the farming method, it boils down to a problem caused by a rise in the water table, in a given area, which carries the naturally-occurring salts closer to the soil surface. Problems develop on farmland when this salt layer reaches the root zone, often greatly reducing or, in many instances, preventing crop production.

The problem is focused on southern Alberta, Canada's largest irrigation region, where about 1.3 million acres of crop land is irrigated.

Eighty-five per cent of this farmland falls within 13 organized irrigation districts which administer the distribution of water from natural and man-made water storage reservoirs through a 12,000 kilometre network of main canals and lateral lines.

Paterson says decades of "very minor seepage" from this canal network has caused about 75 per cent of the salinity problem affecting irrigated land. About another 20 per cent of the salinity problem within the irrigated farming district is blamed on natural groundwater movement, and about five to seven per cent is blamed on on-farm water management.

"People shouldn't assume that we are losing large volumes of water through seepage from the canal system," he says. "That just isn't the case. We have done many tests over the years and determined that seepage is very minimal - somewhere in the order of one to two per cent. But you take that minimal seepage and accumulate it over 30 or 40, or in some cases 70 years of irrigation, and you have a rise in the water table in some areas which leads to the soil salinity problem we see today."

Measures help control soil salinity under irrigation (cont'd)

A saline seep can be located immediately adjacent to the canal or it can show up as much as a half-mile away, depending on the groundwater flow and source of the excess water.

Paterson says the past role on-farm water management has played in causing soil salinity over the years, has essentially been corrected through improved farming methods and technology.

"One common practice 40 years ago which contributed to the problem was wild flood irrigation," says the branch head. "There was inadequate control of water, and salinity often resulted. But in recent years, with a move away from flood irrigation and increased use of wheel-move and pivot sprinkler irrigation systems, on-farm water management has greatly improved. Even where flood irrigation is still used the application and control of water is much better."

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Contact: Brent Paterson
381-5515

March 14, 1988
For immediate release

Subsurface drainage economical and effective

There are three main programs used to tackle the soil salinity problem on Alberta's irrigated farmland and generally improve water-use efficiency, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Brent Paterson, head of the land evaluation and reclamation branch in Lethbridge, says advances such as being more sophisticated in determining which lands are susceptable to salinity, improving canal construction and design, and making wider use of subsurface drainage projects, are all helping to reverse the trend.

Paterson says there are about 200,000 acres of irrigated farmland in Alberta affected by soil salinity, with the majority of the problem caused by the accumulation of seepage from irrigation canals.

He says subsurface drainage, which carries away excess water, isn't always the best solution but it is a popular cost-effective alternative.

The branch head says for new areas, land classification systems are now able to determine irrigation feasibility and ensure that lands susceptible to salinity problems are not irrigated.

Controlling existing seeps through rehabilitation projects involves locating the problem section of the canal and either installing a liner of plastic or concrete, or installing a barrier or "curtain" next to the canal to prevent seepage from affecting crop land. In many cases the canal may need to be rebuilt or relocated to improve capacity and efficiency.

A program launched in the last five years by Alberta Agriculture involves encouraging producers to install shallow subsurface drainage systems on their irrigated land to lower the water table and drain water that causes or contributes to the soil salinity problem.

Subsurface drainage economical and effective (cont'd)

The branch head says on-farm drainage projects offer a cost-effective solution to soil salinity problems. He says for a one-time cost of about $500 an acre a farmer can install a drainage system on affected land which should reclaim the saline land and allow for many decades of normal crop production. It is estimated that a properly installed drainage system will last from 50 to 100 years.

"At one time it was felt that to be effective, on-farm drainage projects had to be installed from seven to 10 feet deep, which is very expensive," says Paterson. "But through field trials and research conducted in recent years we believe that shallow subsurface drainage to depths of four to five feet will work."

The drainage pipe, which is buried in a grid or herringbone pattern throughout the saline or waterlogged land, carries the saline water in the soil profile to a discharge area. It effectively lowers the water table and allows leaching and maintenance of the salt minerals at a depth below the crop root zone.

"We have seen dramatic results from the drainage systems in a short time," says Paterson. "In some cases the saline area was returned to 70 - 80 per cent production efficiency in the first season after drainage was installed."

The provincial government, irrigation districts and farmers have shared the cost of two major demonstration projects in southern Alberta. One project near Bow Island involved draining about 400 acres in one block, while another one being looked at in the Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District will involve a block of about 750 acres.

But there have also been dozens of smaller drainage projects installed and paid for by farmers.

"I would estimate there are between 400 and 450 drainage projects within the irrigated areas of southern Alberta," says Paterson. "And these projects have been paid for by the farmers or, in some cases, through cost-shared agreements with the irrigation districts."

Subsurface drainage economical and effective (cont'd)

"All parties agree that on-farm drainage projects can be much more cost efficient than canal rehabilitation work. Drainage does not eliminate the need for major canal upgrading projects, but irrigation districts can see that in many instances it may be much cheaper to assist a farmer with installation of a drainage system than try and locate and stop a seep in a canal."

Concerns over the impact of returning the discharge water from the saline affected area to a canal or river just haven't materialized, says Paterson. While in many cases the discharge has a high-salt content, drainage effluent volumes are low and have not adversely affected the water quality in the irrigation system or rivers.

"We wanted to know if the discharge would create a salt-loading problem in a canal or a river. But we found that the flow of water from the drains is so low that it has zero impact. Studies also indicate that future drainage effluent will not impact river water quality."

"Although we don't have a lot of water in southern Alberta, fortunately what we do have is of top quality," says Paterson.

"The water applied through the irrigation process adds very little salt to the land - perhaps half a ton per acre per season - so the water itself is not contributing to the salinity problem. And whatever salt there is in the drainage discharge is quickly dissipated once it is returned to the canal or river."

Paterson says that by comparison some areas of California, where water quality is poorer, irrigation can add up to five to six tons of salt to an acre of land per year.

"Based on the results of doing a thorough mapping of the affected areas, we know that salinity on irrigated areas in southern Alberta is in decline," he says. "The major causes have been identified and solutions are known.

"Farmers have really done their part in investing their own capital and ingenuity in improving on-farm water management and in accepting on-farm drainage systems as a means of reclaiming saline soils."

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Ac.1.641

AGRI-NEWS

APR 21 1988

March 21, 1988

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

March 21, 1988
For Immediate Release

Free trade "most important policy" of decade - Lougheed

Former Alberta premier Peter Lougheed has called on Alberta farmers to support the Canada/U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

In a speech to about 450 producers attending an annual Alberta Agriculture conference, Lougheed said the agreement is vital to the future of Canadian agriculture and the economy in general.

"The free trade agreement is the most important public policy decision of the decade for this country," he said. "Although it is not perfect it provides Canadian farmers and industry with more open access and long-term security to U.S. markets.

"It is a groundbreaking document which can be used as an example of the type of trade agreement there can be between two countries."

Speaking to farmers attending the 11th annual Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit Conference in Kananaskis, Lougheed said he is concerned U.S. approval of the free trade agreement may be held up by the 1988 presidential election in November.

He said the document won't go before the U.S. congress for approval until June. And in the meantime congress is also dealing with the Omnibus Trade Bill which in its present form has potential to overrule many of the provisions within with Canada/U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

The former premier says changes in economic conditions and the U.S. presidential nominations could influence how tough the final wording is in the Omnibus Trade Bill.

"I'm not as optimistic as some about approval of the free trade agreement in the U.S. congress," he said. "If the U.S. deficit goes down over the next few months that could reduce the clout of those proposing protectionist trade measures, and could change the tone of the Omnibus Trade Bill."

Lougheed said timing is critical, noting the free trade agreement "could unravel" if it is not approved by the U.S. congress before the presidential election.

(Cont'd)

Free trade "most important policy" (cont'd)

However, he said U.S. officials wanting to save their international image might be influenced to give speedy approval to the free trade agreement. He says trade negotiators probably don't want to attend the next round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades (GATT) with a reputation that says if the U.S. can't strike a trade agreement with its next door neighbor, what chance does it have with foreign countries.

In hoping for early U.S. approval, Lougheed said it is good to have the free trade debate in Canada. He said Canadians haven't appreciated the economic value of international trade.

"The debate has raised public awareness of the value of trade for Canada and Alberta," he said. "It is important for Canadians to be very aware of our trading system. It is something that should be taught in our education system."

Lougheed, who is now a senior partner in a Calgary law firm, said with a recent poll showing 40 per cent of Canadians in favor of the agreement and 39 per cent opposed, more free trade promotion is needed.

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For immediate release

Cripps takes free trade message to Texas

Alberta's associate minister of agriculture has urged U.S. and Latin American business and agriculture officials to lend their support to the Canada/U.S. Free Trade agreement.

Shirley Cripps, in a recent address to business leaders in Houston, Texas, emphasized the economic value the comprehensive bilateral trade agreement will produce for both nations.

The associate minister, speaking to a joint meeting of the Greater Houston Chamber of Commerce and the Inter-American Chamber of Commerce, noted the similarity between Texas and Alberta.

She said the state and province both have large agricultural and energy sectors which drive their economies, and added it was important to maintain and expand their working and trading relationship.

The associate minister made her comments during a recent six day visit to Texas where she participated in the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. This was the associate minister's first time at the annual event, which is billed as the largest livestock show in the Americas.

As many as 1.1 million visitors from 40 different countries came to see more than 30,000 entries shown in the tri-complex, which includes the Houston Astrodome, the Astrohall and the Astroarena.

For 10 years Alberta Agriculture and the Alberta/Canada All Breeds Association have maintained an information booth at the 14-day show promoting sale of Alberta livestock genetics, as well as Alberta's major events and attractions, on an international scale.

Elton Dunk, Alberta Agriculture trade director, says exposure at the Houston show provides dozens of contacts for Alberta's livestock industry with buyers from across the United States and around the world.

Along with participating in the parade which opened the show, and meeting American vice-president and presidential hopeful George Bush, Mrs. Cripps also addressed the International Stockmen's School banquet. The school, held just prior to the show, is an intensive three-days of seminars for livestock producers.

(Cont'd)

Associate Minister Shirley Cripps, front row left, poses with volunteers who man the Alberta Agriculture/ACABA both at the Houston Livestock Show.

The associate minister also addressed an organization of Latin and South American states known as the Confederation InterAmericana de Ganaderos (CIAGA) which is concerned with a wide range of issues involving livestock and agriculture. Alberta is considering an invitation to become a member of CIAGA.

Along with presentations to CIAGA, Mrs. Cripps presented Alberta gifts to Hal Hillman, president of the Houston Livestock Show, James Schilling, president of the show's international committee and Don Jobes, the show's assistant general manager.

Dunk says the associate minister has officially invited representatives of the Houston Livestock Show to visit Alberta this summer.

Leaving Houston, Mrs. Cripps made a tour of the Granada Embryo Transplant facilities near Austin, Texas and also met with Mike Moeller, deputy commissioner of agriculture for Texas and Randy Erben, assistant secretary of state. During this visit, Mrs. Cripps was named an honorary Texas citizen.

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March 21, 1988
For immediate release

Mexican officials interested in Alberta's livestock

Agriculture officials in Alberta and a northern state in Mexico have agreed to see if future programs can be developed to benefit the livestock industries in both jurisdictions.

During a recent tour of Mexico's Nuevo Leon State, Associate Agriculture Minister Shirley Cripps told agriculture and university officials opportunities may exist for a greater transfer of production technology, and export of Alberta livestock and livestock genetics.

The associate minister made the comments during meetings with the state governor, the director of Mexico's department of agriculture, university leaders and members of the influential state livestock union. Mrs. Cripps was accompanied by department trade director Doug Bienert and Gary Smith, president of the Alberta/Canada All Breeds Association.

Associate Agriculture Minister Shirley Cripps was guest at a breakfast hosted by Nueno Leon Governor Jorge Trevino. Above from left, guests include Gary Smith; Gustavo Gonzalez president of the University of Nuevo Leon; Shirley Cripps; Governor Trevino; Alberto Escamilla, director of Nuevo Leon department of agriculture and Doug Bienert.

(Cont'd)

Bienert says during the two day visit to state capital of Monterey the Alberta delegation was able to strengthen relations with state officials.

"Alberta has a good working relationshp with Nuevo Leon State," says Bienert. "In the past we have sold livestock to their ranching industry, and during our recent meetings officials made it clear they are interested in upgrading their livestock industry.

"They are interested in our help not only in supplying purebred breeding stock, but also in providing information and training in reproduction technology such as artificial insemination and embryo transplant techniques."

Bienert says Mrs. Cripps met individually as well as collectively with the different Mexican livestock interest groups. There was also opportunity to tour university and livestock facilities. Along with agreeing to study the potential for future programs, she officially invited representatives to visit Alberta this summer and tour the province's livestock industry and facilities.

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March 21, 1988
For immediate release

Special assignment emphasizes importance of conservation

Two of Alberta Agriculture's soil and water conservation managers will see a temporary change of duties over the next year as a result of a special assignment involving program and policy review and development.

Paul Barlott, who has been head of the conservation and development branch in Edmonton for the past five years, has been seconded to work on three new projects over the next 13 months. John Hermans, who has been head of the soil conservation section since 1983, will replace Barlott as acting head of the branch.

The changes, which become effective immediately, were announced by Brian Colgan, director of the Irrigation and Resource Management Division.

In his new position within the division, Barlott will become senior manager, resource conservation. His responsibilities will include working on development and implementation of major new initiatives in soil conservation in Alberta in response to the National Agriculture Strategy.

Colgan says with the announcement last December of new federal funding for soil conservation programs, Alberta Agriculture sees "a major opportunity for increasing awareness and for promoting adoption of improved soil conserving management practices on farms and ranches across Alberta."

Barlott will also be responsible for conducting a major review of Alberta Agriculture's soil and water conservation and development programs and policies, including their administration and delivery.

As well, he will be responsible for administration of the Canada/Alberta Agreement on Soil, Water and Cropping Research and Technology Transfer on behalf of Alberta Agriculture. He will continue to play a lead role in overseeing the technology transfer aspects and implementation of the province-wide applied research and demonstration activities under that agreement.

(Cont'd)

Special assignment emphasizes importance of conservation (cont'd)

The division director says in appointing John Hermans as acting branch head, the department will maintain continuity of program delivery. Hermans, who has been involved with the department's soil conservation programs since 1978, "brings with him an intimate knowledge of the branch, its programs and its clients."

"Both these appointments exemplify Alberta Agriculture's commitment to maintaining the productivity of Alberta's soil and water resources for agriculture," says Colgan. "The department's objective is to increase the focus on soil conservation and to work with the federal government to institute improved programs, while maintaining the integrity of existing provincial programs."

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For immediate release

Alberta cattle sold to South America

After a five-day cattle liner trip to Florida and a further three-hour flight almost to the equator, 30 head of Alberta's top beef breeding cattle are grazing on the high-elevation grasslands in the Andes mountains of South America.

This is the largest sale of Alberta beef cattle to Colombia, a country of about 26 million people on the northwest coast of the southern continent.

And an Alberta Agriculture trade director says he hopes it is the beginning of further livestock exports for this largely coffee-producing nation attempting to diversify its agricultural economy.

Doug Bienert says these superior quality cattle developed by Alberta breeders will be used to expand beef herds in Colombia and will also be crossed with native South American cattle breeds. There are good prospects for further sales this year, as a mission of Colombian ranchers and breeders is expected to visit Alberta in July.

"Although the export numbers aren't large at this point, I see this as a real breakthrough for Alberta's beef cattle industry," says Bienert. "European countries, particularly France and Germany, have been very aggressive in attempting to sell livestock to Colombia.

"But after seeing the quality of beef cattle we produce here in Alberta there is no doubt in the minds of Columbian breeders about which cattle they prefer. As word of the performance of Alberta cattle spreads we are confident that demand and cattle exports will increase."

Covering about 450,000 square miles, Colombia is about one-and-a-half times the size of Alberta. Considered a nation of small farms, it is the second largest coffee producer in the world, and about 50 per cent of its working population is involved in agriculture.

The sale of purebred Limousin, Simmental and Salers bulls and bred heifers was arranged in two stages in 1987. Acting on a report from Prairie West Livestock, a Red Deer-based livestock export company, that a Colombian cattle buyer was interested in Alberta cattle, Bienert met the buyer while on a trade mission to South America in early 1987.

(Cont'd)

Prairie West Livestock exporter Gary Smith, third from left, with Colombian buyers and one of the Alberta Limousin bulls.

That contact lead to a return visit by the Colombian cattle buyer to Alberta in September 1987.

"The delegation that came to Alberta was very impressed with the quality of cattle we produced," said Bienert. "Compared to the stock offered by other countries, Alberta was clearly a leader."

Prairie West Livestock completed the sale and the cattle were shipped to South America in December. Since arriving in Colombia, the Alberta cattle have been sold to individual ranchers and cattle breeders. Many of the heifers have delivered their calves and Bienert says all cattle are in top condition.

"The Colombian breeders and ranchers are extremely good managers. Although much of their farm land is at high elevation it produces very lush pastures and is very good cattle country. These producers are also very conscious of good livestock nutrition."

Along with being used for breeding purposes the Alberta cattle are expected to be shown at livestock shows in Colombia.

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March 21, 1988
For immediate release

Farmers can cut losses through risk management

While Alberta farmers can't control the weather or do much about world grain and livestock prices, they can take steps at home to help minimize losses caused by poor markets and other disasters, says a Three Hills farmer.

Jack Gorr, speaking at a recent Alberta Agriculture conference, says farmers shouldn't just assume they are powerless over outside influences.

He says risk management philosophy involves a blend of old sayings that range from not putting all your eggs into one basket, and practicing preventative medicine, to being a jack of all trades, and not looking a gift horse in the mouth.

A former Alberta Agriculture farm business manager who has been a full-time farmer since 1972, Gorr says risk management can be as basic as teaching family members how to run the combine so they can fill in if the farmer gets sick, or keeping some old machinery behind the barn in case parts are needed for the new swather.

He says risk management can involve buying insurance to make sure a crop failure isn't a total loss, or knowing a neighbor is there to help out in an emergency.

"For most farmers, risk management probably involves a lot of common sense ideas," Gorr told producers attending the Managing Agriculture Technology for Profit Conference. "But it's part of management planning that needs to be done. There are areas of risk that farmers should think about, and be prepared with an option or alternative if something does go wrong."

Gorr, who operates a grain and cattle farm near Three Hills south of Red Deer, told some of the 450 farmers attending the Kananaskis conference he doesn't have answers for every situation.

"I do not view myself as an expert in this field, nor in any other field for that matter. I do not even know if I would be rated as good, fair or poor in this subject. My only claim to fame is simply that I am still in the business of farming, and who knows, maybe that's what it's all about."

(Cont'd)

Farmers can cut losses through risk management (cont'd)

Gorr told the conference risk management doesn't prevent the problem from happening, it just helps minimize the impact or losses. As an example, he says planning can't prevent a drought, or international price wars, or illness. But risk management can give the farmer some options if disasters do strike.

He said there are five key areas where risk management strategies and tools can be used -- yield, price, machinery, labor and income.

Looking at yield risk, he said depending on weather and market conditions farmers should be prepared with different crop varieties which are better suited to a certain growing season. He said they should perhaps have a few bags of late and early ripening canola and barley on hand in case the weather doesn't co-operate and planting time has to be shifted.

Gorr encouraged farmers to consider crop diversification and mixed farming as a hedge against poor weather and markets. As well, he said crop insurance will help reduce losses and farmers should think of alternate uses to salvage a crop that isn't wiped out, but isn't worth its full value.

To protect themselves from major price swings, he suggested farmers look at contracts, pre-pricing, hedging, cross-crop hedging, diversification, using custom operators, renting land and registering for stabilization plans as options to consider.

To minimize labor risks he said producers should train family members to operate machinery and know how to do key jobs around the farm. As well, he said there should be a plan in place to draw on the help of neighbors and relatives in the event of a problem.

Gorr said farmers should diversify their skills so they can do such things as mechanical repairs or welding without always relying on service people who may not always be available.

To reduce management risks, he said farmers should try to know where parts are available for key pieces of machinery and work with dealers with a good service reputation. He said having backup equipment available is a good idea if the cost can be justified.

(Cont'd)

Farmers can cut losses through risk management (cont'd)

And to reduce the risk of income loss, he said programs such as the Western Grain Stabilization Program, registered retirement saving plans, savings bonds and off-farm work can provide cash in the event of a shortfall in projected income.

Gorr says a farmer can't remove risk from his business, but he can often reduce the impact. Also, he says in some cases producers have to just accept the risk and bear the consequences.

"Many different strategies and/or tools exist to cushion the impact but it is the risk manager's job to pick the most cost effective one, " Gorr said. "Remember the risk is always there, the strategy you take simply determines how and to whom the impact will be directed."

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March 21, 1988
For immediate release

Animal rights issue isn't going to disappear

Farmers shouldn't dismiss animal rights activists as a fringe group of fanatics who will one day fizzle and go away, says a University of Saskatchewan professor.

Dr. C.M. (Red) Williams, speaking to delegates attending a recent Alberta Agriculture conference, says the supporters of animal rights are well-educated, well-funded and have a significant influence over the majority of the Canadian population.

Williams said farmers are fooling themselves if they think they can ignore the animal rights issue, and he urged producers to voluntarily clean up their acts before major changes are legislated.

A professor of animal and poultry science at the Saskatoon university who is highly regarded by the Canadian livestock industry, Williams said farmers must understand the issues and the players involved and not turn their backs to the problem.

Williams said farming practices will have to be above reproach if the livestock industry is to survive.

He predicted the veal calf industry which raises calves in dark, restrictive feeding boxes will be eliminated. As well, other livestock production practices such as branding, dehorning, and castration will be eliminated or modified and there will be design changes to high-density housing for chickens and pigs.

"After my years of working with the livestock industry in Canada I believe I can say I am on your side," he told producers attending the Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit conference in Kananaskis. "But the animal welfare and animal rights issue is not something to be taken lightly. It is a very real fact in Europe and other countries and it is going to become a much greater issue here. It is an issue in Canada that is going to blindside us and we must be prepared."

(Cont'd)

Williams said 95 per cent of Canadians have no direct contact with agriculture and no understanding of the livestock industry. He said most of the population is concerned about animals being protected and cared for with kindness and can easily be moved by reports of cruelty and abuse.

With the population holding this attitude they will have the political control to bring about changes.

Besides livestock producers, the two other players concerned about animals are the animal welfare groups and the animal rights groups.

"The animal welfarists are mostly volunteers who concern themselves with protecting animals from abuse and in educating the public on humane treatment, as well as lobbying governments on protective regulations," said Williams. "The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty of Animals (SPCA) and humane societies are the ones we are most familiar with and we generally applaud their good works."

The livestock specialist said the welfarists accept the need to use animals in agricultural production. Their main concern is that the animals not be abused and are treated humanely.

The animal rightists, on the other hand, have a more radical approach, Williams told the conference. He said they have extreme beliefs and are not open to negotiation. He said they are the most difficult group to deal with and pose the greatest threat to the operation of the livestock industry.

"Animal rightists are not to be considered a bunch of weirdos," said Williams. "They are deeply committed people who range in their beliefs from turning all animals back into their original environments, to vegetarianism, to equating the humane treatment of animals with the human rights movement.

"They are quite prepared to use any method to achieve their objectives, including breaking the law, and certainly injuring other humans through losing them their means of livelihood and abusing their beliefs through harassment. They are well educated, have millions of dollars for their work and they know how to use it."

(Cont'd)

Animal rights issue isn't going to disappear (cont'd)

Williams said the animal rights movement isn't going to wipe out the livestock industry, but he said farmers must be prepared to change.

Some of these changes will mean increased production costs and some may even allow for production increases. He said there will be strict new rules on how livestock can be raised, handled and slaughtered which will require a new attitude among livestock producers.

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For immediate release

Animal abuse means more than just physical suffering

A leading Canadian livestock specialist says more research is needed to determine what damage or harm routine production practices causes domestic livestock.

Dr. C.M. Williams, a professor of animal and poultry science at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, says by learning more about animal behavior farmers will not only be able to keep animal rightists at bay, but also might be able to increase livestock production.

Speaking to the 11th annual Alberta Agriculture Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit Conference in Kananaskis, Williams said the animal welfare issue is going to bring about major changes for the livestock industry.

Williams, who is chairman of the Expert Committee on Animal Welfare and Behaviour with Agriculture Canada, says a key factor needed in dealing with the animal welfare issue is more research into concerns such as psychological stress.

"Animal abuse can take many forms," he said. "We know what gross animal abuse is. These are the animals that may be locked in the barn by some unscrupulous owner and not given food or water for two weeks, or are otherwise caused pain and suffering. We understand gross abuse and abhor it.

"But what about abuse in the form of stress that is placed on animals under normal production practices? This is the same sort of stress we as humans feel in our daily lives and at work. The stress that causes pigs raised in close confinement to bite the tails of other pigs in the pen. Or causes chickens raised in cages to peck at other chickens until they are injured or killed. Or causes steers in a feedlot to assume a dominant role and ride another steer even to the point of death sometimes.

"There is tolerable stress which both humans and animals feel. It is stress we can cope with and is probably good for us. But there is the intolerable stress which causes aberrant behavior in animals. It causes them to become violent or act aggressively toward other animals. What do we know about intolerable stress?"

(Cont'd)

Animal abuse means more than just physical suffering (cont'd)

Williams said to solve the problem of pigs biting, the livestock industry cuts the tails off pigs. To stop poultry from pecking, the industry clips beaks. In the feedlot, the offended animal can be removed from the pen, or put in a duck-out area. He says this prevents injury to one animal, but it doesn't remove the intolerable stress under which an animal is suffering.

"The confined animal cannot help but accept its environment, and if genetically designed to produce, it will do so even when the stress level is well beyond that which could be considered tolerable by human standards.

"So is stress to be considered inhumane treatment? We don't know, we don't have the answers. And until we can defend our management actions with solid proof, the industry is left open to charges from the animal rightists who can show that the animal's behavior is responding to abuse."

The Saskatoon professor says the expert committee he chairs has made several recommendations which it hopes will be implemented by federal authorities.

The committee says more research into animal behavior, on par with nutrition and breeding research, should be funded; more attention to animal behavior should be included in the training of animal scientists and veterinarians; more public education on the best methods of accommodating the needs of animals with profitable raising of livestock is needed; practical codes of practice for extensive, as well as intensive livestock production are needed; and livestock associations should appoint a committee or individual to be responsible for concerns of animal welfare and behavior."

Williams says in light of a recent announcement that the federal government will be reducing its inspection of livestock transportation and slaughter in Western Canada, an effort is needed to convince officials not only to maintain, but expand its inspection services.

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For immediate release

Elzinga credits producers/researchers with program success

Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga has paid tribute to the farmers and scientists who have helped make the multi-million dollar Farming for the Future agriculture research program a success over the last decade.

Speaking to about 150 producers and researchers at a recent conference in Calgary, the Minister said their talent and support has helped develop a world-class program that will have a long-term impact on the the agriculture industry in Alberta and Canada.

Mr. Elzinga stated, "I am proud to work with and congratulate a select group of Albertans which includes members of the academic community, farmers and dedicated members of my department for the outstanding contribution they have made and continue to make to the Farming for the Future program.

"Your work has been crucial to the scope and quality of research and on-farm demonstration projects which have been undertaken. This work has added significantly to crop and livestock production and food processing technology available to the agriculture industry."

The minister referred to an announcement he made earlier in the day of a further $5 million allocation for Farming for the Future projects in 1988. The money, made available through the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund and administered by Alberta Agriculture, will be used to fund 100 scientific projects and at least 100 on-farm demonstration projects.

The 1988 allocation brings total investment in Farming for the Future to about $46 million. The money has funded about 520 agriculture research projects and 540 on-farm demonstration projects.

The minister, speaking at the banquet which wrapped up the 1988 Farming for the Future conference, said the investment in research is one element of the Alberta governments' commitment to agriculture. Along with supporting research and market development, the province has also developed programs which act as an economic safety net for producers and insure "agriculture input costs in Alberta are the lowest in North America."

(Cont'd)

Mr. Elzinga said with agriculture making a $4 billion contribution to the provincial economy, research that leads to more efficient production and development of new and marketable food products is essential.

He said it is important for Alberta farmers and food processors to be competitive, and noted the Canada/U.S. Free Trade Agreement is vital to the future of agriculture.

The Minister stated, "In Alberta we consume only about 23 per cent of the beef we produce, 40 per cent of the pork produced, 50 per cent of the barley and 20 per cent of the wheat. So we depend a great deal on our ability to export these commodities and processed food products. And our greatest trading partner is the United States. It is important that we support free trade. If we don't maintain our access to this market farming as we know it today in Alberta will not exist."

Mr. Elzinga's comments followed a day-long review of some of the most recent Farming for the Future research and on-farm demonstration projects.

Several speakers including university professors, Alberta Agriculture and Agriculture Canada specialists, food processors and farmers presented updates on their work.

Among those addressing the conference was Dr. Frank Aherne of the University of Alberta with a review of the latest research showing the relationship between sow feed intake and reproductive efficiency. Dr. Don Woods of the Agriculture Canada research station at Beaverlodge described work being done to develop new high yielding, more disease resistant varieties of canola.

Ross McKenzie, an Alberta Agriculture soils specialist, described work which showed the value of preparing fertilizer recommendations on the basis of a soil analysis. And Sandy Bibby of UFL Foods Ltd. in Edmonton and Ray Grimson, of Lakeside Research in Brooks discussed research involving new uses for Alberta grain, and feeding for improved profits in the feedlot, respectively.

(Cont'd)

Six farmers from across the province also gave reports about on-farm demonstration projects in which they have been involved. Frank Spanbauer of Barnwell gave a presentation on inoculation of pulse crops; Bill Noy of Rosebud, reviewed the value of using legumes as a plow down crop; Don Gregowich of Kelsy talked about using field peas in hog rations; Bill Hamblin of Vermilion gave a presentation on using a milk supplement for swine litters; Joe St. Denis of Morinville reviewed field pea production; and Don Wieben of Fairview, discussed projects which have helped reduce production costs in the Peace River region.

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For immediate release

Brighter forecast made for agriculture industry

Although the experts aren't saying farmers will be on easy street for the next few years years, compared to the 1987 message, the future for agriculture is much improved.

Most of the dozen speakers addressing the recent Alberta Agriculture Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference in Calgary delivered an upbeat message on at least the short term future of grain, oilseed and livestock markets.

While there is still no hope in sight for a significant improvement in barley prices, all other agricultural commodities are at least holding their own or beginning an upward price trend, the 250 farmers and agri-businessmen from across the province heard during the two-day event.

Many of the speakers, ranging from university professors to industry economists and analysts repeated the theme, although agriculture isn't completely out of the woods, all indicators are good.

On the grains and oilseed side the inventories which have held prices down over the last few years are starting to move and there is also an increasing world demand.

On the livestock side, producers heard that production of both beef and hogs is on the rise meaning as supply increases, prices over the next two to three years will drop. In the meantime cattle prices should remain strong and hog prices should stay above the breakeven point.

Although technology has a dramatic impact on the face of agriculture, specialists say it is still Mother Nature that calls the shots. Several speakers noted that weather continues to be one of the major factors which will control world markets and is a key variable in making market predictions.

Politics, particularly in North America, was also cited as another unknown in making market forecasts about Canadian agricultural markets.

For example, Steven Freed, a grains analyst with a Chicago investment firm, told the conference if a Republican president is elected in November that will indicate little change in U.S. farm policy - a policy which has a major impact on Canadian and world agriculture. However, if a Democratic president is elected "U.S. farm policy will change dramatically."

(Cont'd)

Speakers from both sides of the border, did not see the Canada/U.S. free trade agreement having a negative affect on agriculture markets.

Freed, however did say U.S. commerce generally feels Canadians are getting the better end of the deal in the free trade agreement. Although he said he realized free trade would not allow either country to flood each others' markets with commodities, the U.S. business community perceives it as a concern.

He says some feel the U.S. is working hard to reduce stocks in order to return to more of a free market situation and after all that effort they don't want Canada dumping excess stocks into the U.S. Freed said even a small movement of goods into the U.S. might be seen as too much.

Although conference forecasters said their may be some weakening in markets, the 1990s appeared to offer good prospects for agriculture.

Industry observer Lloyd Quantz, a Calgary-based consultant described the 1990s as a decade of stability for agriculture. He said producers should be cautious in their investments, develop sound farm management plans and learn how to make the best use of technological changes.

The ninth annual conference was sponsored by Alberta Agriculture's market analysis branch and the Alberta Agricultural Economics Association.

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Contact: David Walker
427-7132

Shipping Fever - no easy cure

Bovine respiratory disease or "shipping fever" is caused by so many different factors that controlling it in some feedlots may prove more costly than simply allowing the ailment to take its toll on feedlot herds, says a veterinary epidemiologist.

"Shipping fever is often viewed as a single disease," Dr. Susan Wilson told delegates at Alberta Agriculture's recent Farming for the Future Conference in Calgary. "But it is actually a complex made up of many different diseases, each requiring a separate solution."

Wilson, who helps evaluate the value of animal vaccines at Agriculture Canada's Biologic Evaluation Laboratory in Ottawa, made her comments as part of a scientific team that recently studied the cause of shipping fever.

Another member of the team, Dr. Steve Acres of the Veterinary Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) in Saskatoon, said it is too early to tell if a recently announced shipping fever vaccine will control the disease.

Acres said the vaccine recently developed by a reputable Canadian company and tested at the University of Guelph, shows promise in controlled conditions, but the "proof of the pudding" will come from two or three years of use in the field. Acres said along with the viruses and bacteria that cause shipping fever, there are also management and environmental factors involved that a vaccine can't address.

Though shipping fever is the most common cause of sickness in feedlot cattle "it is very important for the industry to acknowledge that the cost of controlling respiratory diseases on an industry basis may exceed the cost of the disease because of the many combinations of factors involved," Wilson told the Calgary conference.

Wilson, Acres and Dr. Terry Church of Alberta Agriculture, in 1981, began monitoring more than 200,000 feedlot cattle in Alberta to determine the factors which cause shipping fever.

(Cont'd)

Among their findings:

* Shipping fever outbreaks are not as common as generally believed. Among the cattle studied by Wilson and others, shipping fever epidemics tended to occur within a proportionately small number of groups. "Thus if an investor feeds a large number of groups each year, the losses from one high risk group are spread over the others," said Wilson.
* Calves are more likely to contract bovine respiratory disease than are yearling cattle.
* A group of feeder cattle has a slightly bigger chance of getting shipping fever if it is transported over long distances.
* Calf and yearling groups shipped directly from ranch to feedlot tended to have lower rates of respiratory disease than those passing through auction markets.
* Mixing cattle from various sources enables infectious agents to spread more easily. "As mixing is a major part of cattle management, it would seem impossible to deal with this risk factor without major changes to the marketing system," said Wilson. However, feedlot owners can minimize the impact of shipping fever by frequent pen-checking and early treatment.
* The widespread use of various vaccines for bacteria and viruses has done little to reduce the rate of bovine respiratory disease.
* The vaccination of cattle upon arrival at the feedlot has questionable effectiveness.

"The most important fact to take away from this presentation," said Wilson, "is that shipping fever is caused by many factors." This means "no single vaccine, drug or management strategy can prevent it."

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Contact: Dr. Yilma Teklemariam
Farming for the Future
427-1956

Accurate fertilizer recommendations are critical

Provincial government agriculturalists have devised a more accurate method of making fertilizer recommendations, says an Alberta Agricultural soil fertility specialist in Lethbridge.

Ross McKenzie, speaking to delegates at Alberta Agriculture's Farming for the Future Conference in Calgary, said he and his colleagues conducted fertilizer trials on soils of varying nutrient levels at 76 different sites throughout the province from 1984 to 1987.

"Reliable and up-to-date charts that relate soil test values to response to nitrogen fertilizer can be used by soil testing labs, farmers and fertilizer dealers in determining how much fertilizer to use with specific crops," said McKenzie, formerly an irrigation specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Accurate fertilizer recommendations are crucial to today's prairie farmer, he said. Years of cultivation and cropping have dramatically reduced the organic materials found in prairie soils. As a result, farmers must fertilize their land in order to maximize yields. But applying too much fertilizer can be as unprofitable as not applying any at all.

McKenzie, who has a B.Sc. in agriculture from the University of Alberta and who is currently working part-time on a PhD with the University of Saskatchewan, outlined a method whereby grain growers can analyse the economics of their fertilizer use.

"Determination of economic rate of nitrogen fertilizer can be calculated using the cost of N fertilizer per pound and estimating the value of the crop at harvest time," he said.

McKenzie called upon the fertilizer industry, government and university research agronomists to "ensure extensive, local fertilizer research is conducted throughout Alberta annually." He said it is difficult to make accurate fertilizer recommendations unless specific regional conditions are taken into account.

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McKenzie also urged farmers to follow a soil fertility program to achieve maximum economic yields. He explained that a fertilizer program has three basic components: use of proper fertilizer; use of efficient application methods; and, perhaps most importantly, application of fertilizer at the rates most appropriate to the specific crop and growing conditions.

"Today's innovative and successful farmers aim for maximum crop yields," said McKenzie. "Farmers must follow a soil fertility program to achieve maximum economic yields."

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Contact: Dr. Yilma Teklemariam
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427-1956

For immediate release

Animal nutritionist says more research needed

Individuals and companies involved in agriculture must step up the search for and application of new technologies, animal nutritionist Raymond Grimson told delegates attending the recent Alberta Agriculture Farming for the Future Conference in Calgary.

"The commercial success of modern agriculture is highly dependant on the quick adaptation of new technology that reduces unit costs or increases output," said Grimson, who is manager of the privately-owned Lakeside Research Division of Lakeside Feeders Ltd. at Brooks.

"The Farming for the Future program is playing a vital role in encouraging private companies to conduct research," he said.

In general, said Grimson, Farming for the Future is helping the industry to reduce production costs, improve product quality and improve its competitive position in world markets.

As an example of how Farming for the Future is encouraging private research, the speaker cited his own company, which has conducted several feedlot experiments. He told conference participants that reassessing traditional feedlot practices has had significant economic impact on Lakeside.

In one experiment 192 Hereford steers were given varying amounts of protein supplements in their barley diets. The findings showed economic returns were increased by $13 to $15 per head through the addition of either protein or protein combined with sulphur.

Grimson, who also manages Lakeside's Mortensen Poultry Ltd. and all nutrition programs for Lakeside's two feedmills, 30,000 cattle feedlot and 250 sow farrow-finish swine unit, said other experiments done by Lakeside involved determining the effects of barley bushel weights and processing methods on feedlot performance, and examining more effective means of preserving such silage feed as alfalfa.

(Cont'd)

Since establishing Lakeside's research division in 1973, Grimson has developed a nutrition consulting and management program now comprising 60 cattle pens, a complete soil, feed and water testing laboratory, and a facility for nutritional experiments on swine. He now oversees a staff of six agrologists and 11 technical and support personnel.

"Reliance upon traditional methods of agriculture no longer ensures survival," said Grimson. "Everyone in the industry, from producer to processor, must implement new cost-saving technologies as soon as possible."

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Contact: Dr. Yilma Teklemariam
Farming for the Future
427-1956

For immediate release

Farm management both an art and science

Developing top-notch farm managers is the purpose of the University of Alberta's new agricultural business management program, says a rural economist with the Edmonton institution.

Dr. Leonard Bauer said today's young farmers must learn sound business management principles to cope in the increasingly technological and commercialized world of agriculture,

Speaking to the 150 delegates attending the recent Alberta Agriculture Farming for the Future Conference in Calgary, Bauer said the program which he directs, is the first of its kind in Canada to involve the participation of a business faculty.

He said this makes good sense because "the principles of management apply equally as well to farming as to any other type of business." In fact, said Bauer, it is commonplace to find farms with balance sheets listing assets in excess of $3 million, which is the size of many small firms.

Bauer, who was a district agriculturalist and farm management specialist with Alberta Agriculture before joining the U of A in 1977, defined farm management as "the art and science of making decisions about the use of available resources and acting on those decisions in an uncertain world so that the short- and long-term goals of the business owners are as fully satisfied as possible."

Management, said Bauer, involves four key areas: production; marketing; finances; and personnel. To succeed, he said today's farmer must be adept in all four.

Sound production management means determining what crops and livestock to produce, how much to produce, and how to produce them, said Bauer.

"In the case of crops this means decisions about fertilizers, pesticides and tillage operations. In the case of livestock it means decisions about feeding, herd health and breeding schedules."

(Cont'd)

As marketers, farmers must learn to form price expectations and to tailor their production to those expectations.

Financially, farmers must become adept at acquiring and financing of assets. "The first step is to estimate the cash flows likely to be generated by the assets," the professor advised.

As a personnel manager, the farmer must be able to motivate both hired labor and members of his own family. Often, the farmer must know how to impart managerial skills to the next generation, a task involving considerable teaching and training.

Noting that many of Alberta's farmers are already competent business managers, Bauer predicted, "those farmers who emerge from the current economic situation will be more aggressive seekers and users of information about management. They will challenge researchers and teachers to discover and impart new ways of doing business."

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Contact: Dr. Yilma Teklemariam
Farming for the Future
427-1956

For immediate release

Plastic storage tanks may cause problems for fuel

Farmers using the semi-transparent plastic tanks to store diesel fuel should check fuel quality before they start spring field work.

Specialists with Alberta Agriculture and the Alberta Research Council say there have been more than half a dozen cases in the last few months where farmers using fuel from the tanks have run into problems.

It is believed light passing through the semi-transparent containers is affecting the diesel fuel quality, causing it to quickly plug fuel filters.

"Diesel fuel stored in light-transmitting, plastic tanks may deteriorate faster than it normally would," says John Chang, an energy engineer with Alberta Agriculture, reporting on a preliminary conclusion reached following testing by the Gasoline and Oil Testing Laboratory at the Alberta Research Council in Edmonton.

"Last fall, the laboratory analyzed a number of diesel fuel samples from plastic storage tanks. The farmers were finding that the fuel filters on their tractors were plugging very quickly, sometimes within a few days. Many of the samples were light orange in color and smelled somewhat like used paint thinner; in other words, they did not look or smell like diesel fuel. The analyses showed that many of the samples failed a laboratory test (oxidation stability) which indicated that their useful storage life had passed."

Chang says based on the limited laboratory analyses and fuel storage information, no one can say definitely whether the cause for the deterioration was exceeding the fuel storage life, unsuitable storage tanks or other factors.

"But the incidence of fuel deterioration in light-transmitting plastic tanks does cause some concern," he says. "One significant difference between the semi-transparent plastic tanks and metal tanks is that the sunlight passes through the semi-transparent plastic to the fuel inside. It is known that the ultra-violet rays in sunlight will accelerate the degradation of the fuel."

(Cont'd)

Plastic storage tanks may cause problems with fuel (cont'd)

The engineer says farmers with fuel stored in plastic tanks should check the fuel for unusual odor, solids and off-color before spring field work begins. If spoilage is suspected, laboratory analysis of a sample of the fuel would be useful in determining the suitability of the fuel for use in engines.

Farmers can call the Gasoline and Oil Testing Laboratory, Alberta Research Council at 450-5101 (Edmonton) for information on fuel analysis. To save long distance charges, call the AGT operator and ask for Zenith 22333 which will connect the caller with the nearest RITE government operator.

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Contact: John Chang
427-2181

For immediate release

Barley prices may be up slightly in 1988

Average non-board Alberta barley prices aren't expected to be much better than $1.43 a bushel this year, says a southern Alberta market analyst.

Lynn Malmberg, a specialist with Lakeside Farm Industries in Brooks, told an Alberta Agriculture market outlook conference the prospects for barley prices aren't likely to pass the $65 a tonne mark unless there is a major crop failure in the United States...and that isn't likely.

He told the 250 producers attending the ninth annual Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference the price estimate was made using a relatively simple formula based on initial payment, the adjustment payment, final payment and crop inventory.

The economist said his price relied on several assumptions and could change if the assumptions changed.

Malmberg first predicted the initial payment this year will be about $5 per tonne higher than 1987 at about $50 per tonne. He did not expect an adjustment or final payment.

He told farmers he expected about 10.61 million acres of barley will be harvested in 1988. With an average yield of about 50 bushels per acre that should produce about 11.55 million tonnes of barley this year.

If this new production is added to the carryover of 4.21 million tonnes, total supply will be about 15.76 million tonnes in the new crop year compared to 17.51 million tonnes in 1987.

"The hard part comes when we get to forecasting exports which for the moment is anybody's guess," he said. "Let's assume they will remain around five million tonnes, more or less like they are expected to be this year.

(Cont'd)

"Feed use will likely be up a few per cent to about 7.8 million tonnes. Under these assumptions the carryover out of the 1988/89 crop year will be around 2.16 million tonnes. This level of carryover would result in a stocks/use ratio of about 16 per cent, which means if we had no other barley, the carryover would be adequate to supply our needs for about 16 per cent of the year.

"Based on these assumptions, the average Alberta non-board price would average around $65.78 per tonne, or about $1.43 per bushel, or slightly higher than that experienced for most the year."

For more information on the barley pricing formula contact Malmberg in Brooks at 362-3326.

The Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference was co-sponsored by Alberta Agriculture's market analysis branch and the Alberta Agriculture Economics Association.

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Contact: Lynn Malmberg
362-3326

For immediate release

Pacific current carries good news for North America

Although that major warm current in the Pacific Ocean known as El Nino hasn't been good news for every country, it should bring another one or two years of improved markets for North American grain and oilseed producers, says a U.S. weather specialist.

Gail Martell, an agricultural meteorologist for the investment firm of Shearson, Lehman and Hutton in Milwaukee, told an Alberta Agriculture conference in Calgary, El Nino changed weather patterns on the Pacific west coast causing both rice and palm oil crop failures.

What was bad news for countries such as India, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia and Southeast Asia, has lead to increased exports, reduced inventories and higher prices for both wheat and oilseeds.

Martell told the Accent 88 - Taking Stock conference that although the cyclical warming trend of El Nino has just about ended and the growing season in Asian countries should return to near normal in 1988, it will probably take about two years to get back to full crop production.

The specialist told the market outlook conference El Nino did not have much influence on Alberta's or North America's growing season, although it is suspected as cause of recent mild and dry falls and winters.

The specialist said precipitation in Alberta since last September is 32 and 77 per cent of normal. The dry pattern may be related to El Nino since during El Nino winters, there is typically a split in the jet stream which steers storm systems south through California or north through northern British Columbia, leaving the prairies "high and dry".

Referring to past weather/crop trends, Martell said she found wheat yields following the seven driest falls and winters in Alberta since 1960 surprising.

"Incredibly, yields were very poor in only four out of those seven years," she said. "Two years had good yields, while one had average yields. The results may not surprise a native Albertan. Since the bulk of annual precipitation falls in the spring and summer, good yields are possible even with very poor subsoil moisture reserves."

(Cont'd)

"I am optimistic about grain and oilseed prices in particular for this coming year," she told the 250 farmers attending the conference.

"For four consecutive years, 1981 to 1984 world wheat production set a new record leading to a massive building in stocks and stagnant prices. Global oilseed production grew by 16 per cent during the same period. Surplus oilseed stocks have been hanging over the market for two to three years preventing a recovery in prices. But the situation is beginning to change. World demand for grains and oilseeds is on the upswing while supplies are declining."

The specialist said the market surge is not an artificial demand caused by the U.S. and European price war, which has stimulated buying. She said there are serious long term trends developing in countries such as the Soviet Union and China which indicate a growing demand for wheat.

"The cyclical El Nino phenomenon has caused widespread food shortages in Asian countries and is one major reason for the upsurge in world wheat and vegetable oil trade. Continuing strong demand ought to keep wheat and vegetable oil prices on an upward trend through the first half of 1988.

"Both Russia and China have contributed to the strong demand by importing massive quantities of these commodities in the past year. Politics and economic development appear to be largely responsible for USSR and Chinese imports."

The Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference was co-sponsored by Alberta Agriculture's market analysis branch and the Alberta Agriculture Economics Association

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Contact: Gail Martell
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For immediate release

Cattle prices expected to remain strong

Although another downturn in the cattle industry is expected in the early 1990s, an industry market analyst says prices should generally remain strong through 1988 and into 1989.

Dennis McGivern, an economic analyst with XL Food Systems in Calgary, told a recent Alberta Agriculture conference he couldn't predict how severe the next livestock market cycle would be.

Speaking to about 250 producers attending the Alberta Agriculture Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference in Calgary, McGivern said he believes the supply situation has just about hit bottom and cattle numbers should start to increase.

He said although there is potential for only modest growth of Canadian cattle numbers, the industry "should still see a positive supply response for at least the next two to three years."

Looking at prices, the economist said he expected fed cattle prices to strengthen this spring, reaching the upper $80 per hundredweight (CWT) to the low $90s CWT by May.

"This forecast is dependant upon the assumptions of feedlots in Canada and the U.S. maintaining marketing rates which keep the cattle current, and normal season strength in demand for the barbecue season," he said.

McGivern said he expects increasing beef supplies, along with larger volumes of competitive meats to pressure prices back down to the upper $70s by the end of the summer, followed by a moderate uptrend to the end of the year. He predicted a similar trend for 1989 although at lower prices than in 1988.

Turning to the cow-calf operator and feeder cattle prices, McGivern said the situation should remain "relatively profitable". This will continue to fuel rebuilding of the cattle herd into the 1990s.

"Considering 1988 I believe we will see stronger prices than the current market level for feeder calves as we move towards the spring," he said.

(Cont'd)

"This is coupled with the expected prices for fed cattle and good demand from both the feedlot and grass sectors. Prices will soften in the second half of the year. I think we could still see a good share of the high quality feeder steer calves in the $120 to $125 per CWT range this fall, but less in the $130 to $140 per CWT region we had last fall."

Looking at yearlings he said prices could average higher in 1988 compared to 1987.

"Yearling numbers are currently very tight and prices will remain relatively high into the summer. In fact, I believe feeder steer prices will spend most of the year in the $100 to $105 per CWT region, with weaker prices in the early fall."

The XL spokesman said these high prices will keep the feedlot operators on their toes.

"Feedlot operators will experience a squeeze on margins, but will still have opportunities for profit through careful attention to operational details (control of costs) and risk management."

The Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference was co-sponsored by Alberta Agricultures market analysis branch and the Alberta Agriculture Economics Association

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Contact: Dennis McGivern
258-3233

Next decade will offer more stability

After an emotional 15 year roller coaster ride, the 1990s should offer agriculture a decade of relative stability, says an industry observer.

Compared to the turmoil, swings and uncertainty that has rocked the industry since the 1970s, Lloyd Quantz a specialist in agricultural trends told a recent Calgary conference, the industry should see some fairly smooth water over the next few years.

Quantz, president of AgriTrends Research Inc. told the Alberta Agriculture market outlook conference, there will still be challenges and changes for producers, but the next decade should provide a time for them to get their management and affairs in order.

He said after the promises made in the early 70s of good times ahead for agriculture, many producers are disillusioned.

"It started with Mr. (Pierre) Trudeau, then OPEC, inflation and high interest, then El Nino, Chernobyl, grasshoppers, drought, the EEC and debt," he told the 250 farmers attending the Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference.

"That's how some of us would summarize the golden era of agriculture since the predictions of the early 70s of never ending demand for food and an exploding population. The promise was tantalizing. Farmers would, after centuries of subservience to market forces, become price setters and would be able to capitalize on the war against starvation.

"For many people today, the last 15 years have been the most rewarding and yet the most harrowing time in recent history...After so many things going wrong and nothing appearing to go right, many have become as pessimistic about the future as they once were optimistic about the 1980's.

But Quantz told farmers indicators are for generally improved economic conditions heading into the 1990s. He said he hoped producers wouldn't forget the lessons of the early 70s and remember that the bubble can burst. Farmers will have to use their heads to avoid the mistakes made over the last two decades.

(Cont'd)

"The 1990s are likely to feel more rewarding than the 1980s because of our lowered expectations," he said. "After a heavy dose of realism some forecasters and farmers have gone on to addiction on pessimism. But stick with realism."

Describing an economic depression, as a recession that gets out of control, Quantz said there is a possibility of a depression early in the next decade. However, he said each time the financial community accommodates a major shock like a third world debt default, a major retraction in stock market prices, and even a skirmish in the Middle East a measure of confidence in the economy returns.

"The risk of a depression is with us, but if we can get through the next two or three years without any major panic I think the worst will be behind us."

Quantz says he sees the 1990s as a period of low inflation, slower money growth and a concentration of wealth. He says there will also be more deregulation as governments allow industry more freedom to manage their affairs.

He also predicted farm debt will decline and there will be less debt for capital items. Lending institutions will make fewer but wiser loans. While some people feel farm real estate values have fallen too much, Quantz says prices are now reaching what he considers more of a long term average.

The economist told the conference the next decade will see a flood of new technology and innovations on the market for agriculture. He cautioned producers to be careful in their choices. Some of the innovations will be useful and make production more efficient. Others will be using farmers as guinea pigs to test new technology and this could prove costly.

The Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference was co-sponsored by Alberta Agriculture's market analysis branch and the Alberta Agriculture Economics Association

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Contact: Lloyd Quantz
295-0100

For immediate release

Call before you dig or deep till

Farmers and other rural landowners planning to dig or cultivate any deeper than 18 inches should make sure they know where gas lines and other underground services are located before breaking ground.

"Check before you dig" is not only a good rule for safety sake, but also to protect the pocketbook.

John Chang, an Alberta Agriculture energy engineer in Edmonton says locating underground utility lines is as easy as making a phone call and can prevent a lot of grief down the road.

"It is your responsibility to check for underground pipelines or other services, if you are planning to deep till, install fence posts, level land, dig basements or dugouts, remove peat or install tile drainage," says Chang.

"Some recent accidents involving farmers digging into pipelines have highlighted the importance of locating underground services before carrying out these and other types of ground disturbances. Cultivation to a depth of greater than 45 centimetres (18 inches) is also considered a "ground disturbance".

Chang says with about 240,000 kilometres of pipelines in Alberta, the most common danger involves digging into pipelines. However, there is also the risk of cutting into underground electricity, water, sewage and telephone lines.

Before doing any ground disturbance work, landowners and contractors have a responsibility to check for underground services. Chang says there are three steps to follow.

1. Check the land title and related documents for the existence of underground services on your land. If you are renting land, check with the landowner.
2. Search the area for warning signs or other evidence of underground lines.

(Cont'd)

3. Contact all companies that may have underground services in the area.

   a) Telephone Alberta 1st Call Location Service at 1-800-242-3447. In some areas, this service can assist in contacting all companies with underground services. However, since not all companies subscribe to this program, do not rely solely on this service.

   b) Check with the local county development office which should be able to advise you of companies that have installed underground services in your area.

   c) Check the pipeline records of the Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) at one of their area offices or their head office in Calgary at 297-8311. You may call this number toll-free by dialing the AGT operator and asking for Zenith 22333.

   d) Call all utilities and pipeline companies that may have underground lines in the area.

The agriculture engineer says if there are underground services in the work area, the farmer should request owner-companies to locate the lines. This is a free service offered by the utilities.

Any producer planning to carry out a ground disturbance within 30 metres (98 feet) of a pipeline, must call the pipeline owner at least 48 hours before work begins so the pipeline can be located and marked.

Also, ground disturbances within the pipeline right-of-way requires the written approval of the pipeline owner. Land owners should not try to judge the location of underground services from sketches or drawings they find. Let the owner-companies locate them exactly.

"Digging into underground services can be dangerous, sometimes causing bodily injury or even death," says Chang. "Also, any person digging into underground services is responsible for the cost of damage caused. Determining the location of underground lines is the wise and safe thing to do."

For further information contact John Chang, engineering services, Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton at 427-2181.

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Contact: John Chang
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For immediate release

Changes made to lime freight assistance program

Alberta Agriculture has announced changes to the Agricultural Lime Freight Assistance (ALFA) Program effective April 1.

Along with supporting the agricultural lime producers, the revised program will also provide incentive for development of local marl suppliers.

Ground limestone is a mineral containing calcium carbonate, while marl is a recent water-deposited calcium carbonate. Both lime and marl are used to reduce acidity in the soil

The original intent of the ALFA program initiated in 1981 was to provide freight assistance to farmers in order that agricultural lime sources be developed near areas of need.

Areas of acid soils (pH 6.0 and less) occur in west and north central Alberta and the Peace River region. Three sources at Exshaw, Rocky Mountain House and near Dawson Creek, B.C. have been developed.

There is also potential to develop other liming material supplies such as marl. Marl deposits occur north and west of Edmonton (Stony Plain, Clyde) and in the Peace region (Snipe Lake, Grimshaw, Bay Tree).

Some revisions to the program have been approved to bring the program in line with present needs, opportunities and the economy. The changes include:

1. A grant of $3 per cubic metre will be paid in addition to a grant of 50 per cent for freight for marl. There will be a grant limit of $9 per cubic meter for freight assistance.

2. The new maximum freight rates for agricultural lime will be nine cents per tonne kilometre for hauls up to 200 kilometres, 7 cents for hauls up to 500 kilometres, six cents for hauls up to 600 kilometres and five cents per tonne kilometre for hauls of more than 600 kilometres. These new rates are in line with present freight rates for other similar products.

3. The maximum grant payment per application will now be $8,000 per fiscal year (April 1 to March 31).

(Cont'd)

Changes made to lime freight assistance program (cont'd)

It is expected these changes will encourage development of local marl supplies while maintaining the developed sources of agricultural limestone.

Producers can make application for assistance at any Alberta Agriculture district office. Applications must be accompanied by copies of receipts for the product, freight including weigh scale tickets for lime, and a lime requirement test report showing an original soil pH of 6.0 or less.

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Contact: Adolph Goettel
427-2530

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AGRI-NEWS

April 4, 1988

For immediate release

CANADIANA
APR 2 7 1988

This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

Proposals on improving honey sales being sought

Alberta beekeepers are looking for people involved in all aspects of the industry to come up with sound ideas on how to sell more honey in both domestic and international markets.

Industry participants involved in the production, processing or marketing of honey can submit their proposals under a recently announced provincial program. Deadline for the first round of submissions is April 15.

Both short and long-term proposals are being sought under the Marketing and Promotion Program for Alberta Honey, which was announced earlier this year by Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga.

The marketing and promotion program is backed by a $200,000 provincial grant which will be used to assist with the implementation of approved projects. The grant which will provide dollar-for-dollar matched funding, to a maximum of 50 per cent of shared costs, will be administered by the Alberta Beekeepers Association and Alberta Agriculture.

Carol Love Rolheiser, a marketing services officer with Alberta Agriculture, says the program is looking for two types of responses - short-term proposals which will stimulate immediate sales of Alberta honey, and long-term proposals which could involve new product development and new market opportunities.

Short-term proposals can be directed toward any of three areas. They can involve retail marketing strategies such as in-store demonstrations for both domestic and foreign markets.

They can involve export market development projects and activities that target international marketplaces, deal with market access or develop contacts with potential buyers.

Or they can involve development of promotion materials to be used as tools in marketing and sale of Alberta honey.

Love Rolheiser says with the current low producer prices and a high inventory of stored honey, priority will be given to proposals that offer immediate relief to the industry.

(Cont'd)

Proposals on improving honey sales sought (cont'd)

Long-term proposals can also be directed toward three areas. They can include new product development to increase usage of Alberta honey.

They can include proposals for marketing branded products. Research shows once a brand-name product has a share of the market it is more difficult for a competitor to take over the market.

And proposals can include ideas for improved and innovative packaging. Many packers/marketers indicate that honey product packaging could be more appealing, functional and easier to use by the customer, be it food service or retail. There may also be other uses of honey that have not been developed.

Submissions should include a full explanation of the proposal, a detailed budget, project benefits, the applicant's background and how the project relates to future plans.

For application forms or details contact Louise Zwaenepoel, Alberta Beekeepers Association, 2434 - 104 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6J 4J8 or phone 435-0306.

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Contact: Carol Love Rolheiser
427-7366

For immediate release

Seminar to discuss producing hay for Japan

Alberta hay producers who can pay close attention to production details may be interested in supplying a specialty hay product for the $100 million a year long-fibre hay market in Japan.

A seminar on long-fibre hay products will be held in Airdrie April 13 to explain to farmers the type of hay and production standards required for export to Japan. Beginning at 1 p.m. in the Alberta Agriculture regional office, the seminar will feature several speakers who will talk about market potential, management and cultural practices.

Ab Barrie, an Alberta Agriculture trade director in Edmonton, says there is an opportunity for farmers who can produce very clean, high quality timothy or alfalfa hay that will sell for about $80 or $90 a tonne at the farm gate.

But Barrie stresses that "clean" and "high quality" are the key phrases farmers need to understand.

Long-fibre hay products are different from the cubed and pelleted hay products now manufactured in Alberta and exported to countries such as Japan.

Barrie says long-fibre products are made in a process which compresses a regular 60 to 70 pound bale of hay to about half the size allowing for more economical shipment.

The Japanese, who don't have enough landbase to produce all their own forage, like this long-fibre product for cattle and horse rations. They import about 427,000 tonnes a year, most of it from California and Washington state, and most of it made from alfalfa, timothy, sudan grass and orchard grass hay.

Barrie says Japan wants to diversify its supply source and is anxious to buy from Alberta if standards can be met.

The trade director says the two key factors in getting a share of the market is to produce top quality hay and produce hay free of an insect pest the Japanese don't want - the Hessian fly.

(Cont'd)

The fly, which is found sporadically in Alberta, can cause wide-spread damage in cereal crops, such as rice and barley. It uses wheat and barley varieties, wheat grasses and agropyrons such as quack or couchgrass as a host.

To keep the pest from reaching its shores, the Japanese will not accept untreated hay products from Alberta that contain any of the recognized host plants. Barrie says farmers can produce hay which is free of these host plants, but they must pay close attention to production details to avoid contamination.

Recommended cultural practices include planting the forage variety in a clean field using certified seed. Do not underseed with a cereal crop.

Any hay destined for the Japanese market should not be taken from the first year of growth after seeding. The hay should be made from two-year-old or older stands and taken from second and third cuts.

Hay producers need to open the headlands of the field to remove forage from the outside edge that may have been contaminated from adjacent fields. The headland hay should be baled separately and kept away from hay stacked for processing and export.

The good hay should be stored under cover to avoid any weather damage. If the hay is covered by a tarp, wheat or barley straw bales should not be used to hold the tarp down.

Once a stack is certified for export, a portable compactor can be contracted to process the hay at the farm.

At the Airdrie seminar, co-sponsored by Alberta Agriculture market development division and the Canadian Densified Hay Association, hay producers will hear about export market potential and the quality control measures required.

Speakers will include Alberta Agriculture forage specialists, Agriculture Canada representatives, commercial compactors and exporters.

For more information on the seminar contact the regional forage specialist in Airdrie at 948-8535, Lethbridge, 381-5124 or Red Deer at 340-5325 or Ab Barrie in Edmonton at 427-4241.

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Contact: Ab Barrie
427-4241

Book covers history of Alberta livestock exhibitors at Toronto Royal

Any Alberta farmers who ever rode the "Toronto Royal" train or exhibited livestock at Canada's premier winter fair during the first half of the century will want a copy of a recently published history book.

Fifty years of Alberta participation in the Toronto Royal Winter Fair, from 1922 to 1972, has been captured in the 125-page book written and compiled by two now retired, long-time Alberta Agriculture employees.

"Alberta Royal Exhibits" was produced by Charlie Gordon, a former director of the department's animal industry division and Jack Kerns, who for years worked as provincial livestock supervisor.

The book provides a brief history of the Toronto Royal train which carried Alberta producers and their livestock exhibits to the fair, as well as a listing of the hundreds of Alberta exhibitors by class and by year.

"For a number of years, a Toronto Royal train was made up in Alberta and the livestock and the owners or attendants travelled together to and from Toronto on this train," says Ken Spiller, director of the animal industry division. The train was discontinued in 1972.

"As this train and the fair was an important facet in the livestock industry and due to requests from industry, the department felt there was a need to put together a history and highlights of Alberta Royal exhibits over the 50-year period."

Gordon and Kerns, who over the years acted as overseers of the train, compiled the report from many different sources.

Along with the written text it includes many photos such as a 1930 shot of four prize winning Hereford bulls owned by Frank Collicut of Crossfield, and a 1958 photo of Alberta grade steer class winners including cattle owned by Walter Jenkins of Twin Butte and Doug Buchanan of Pincher Creek.

(Cont'd)

Other pictures include a 1957 photo of Lawrence Rye of Edmonton with his Canadian champion Clydesdale horse, a 1958 photo of the grand champion Holstein cow owned by Pickard and Clark of Carstairs, and John Wilson Jr. of Innisfail with a champion Corriedale ewe and Russel Yurkiw of Radway with a reserve champion Tamworth boar.

This soft-cover, 8½ x 11 inch book is available from Alberta Agriculture for $5 per copy. Anyone interested should send a cheque, payable to the Provincial Treasurer to Al Russell, Animal Industry Division, Alberta Agriculture, #204, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

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Contact: Ken Spiller
427-5091

For immediate release

Canola growers must work to slow spread of blackleg

With Alberta canola acreage expected to increase substantially this year, farmers should become even more aware of a devastating disease spreading west across the province, that has potential to cost the industry millions of dollars in lost revenue.

Virulent blackleg, which is the number one canola disease in Saskatchewan, is spreading rapidly in east-central Alberta, as far west as Lamont and Camrose.

Although researchers are trying to develop Canola varieties which are resistant to blackleg, until that happens, farmers should take precautions seriously.

"Alberta canola growers cannot afford to wait for resistant varieties, they must take action now," says Lorraine Harrison, a regional plant pathologist with Alberta Agriculture in Fairview.

"Growers should buy certified seed from clean areas and treat all seed before planting. By working together canola growers and the seed industry can slow the spread of blackleg in infected areas and help keep it out of clean areas."

Since virulent blackleg was first detected on rapeseed stubble in east-central Saskatchewan in 1975, the disease has spread through most of Saskatchewan and into Manitoba. Blackleg was first observed in Alberta, near Vermilion in 1983. In 1987 the canola disease survey conducted by provincial plant pathologists showed blackleg is spreading rapidly in east-central Alberta.

Harrison says last year in Saskatchewan yield losses of 25 per cent were recorded from infected fields with some losses as high as 70 per cent from severely infected fields.

"If this disease becomes widespread in Alberta it could translate into losses of millions of dollars to our industry," says the specialist.

(Cont'd)

Virulent blackleg of canola is a "declared pest" under the Alberta Agricultural Pests Act. The act says it is the duty of the individual farmer "to prevent the establishment and control, or destroy all pests on or in the land and destroy any crop, vegetation or other matter that contributes to the maintenance of a pest."

Harrison says blackleg can spread by infected seed and by spores on infected stubble. She says there are several measures that can be used to reduce the introduction and spread of the disease.

1. Buy locally grown certified canola seed if possible. Do not buy seed from known infected areas. Remember that is is illegal to buy, sell and/or transport blackleg infected seed.
2. When buying canola seed, request information on where the seed was grown. If the location is near a known infected area ask for a blackleg test certificate or have the seed lot tested for blackleg. Norwest Labs, 9939-67 Avenue, Edmonton (483-5522) will do the test for $35 with a 50 gram sample. If virulent blackleg is found, do not buy or plant the seed.
3. Treat all canola seed before planting regardless of its origin. This is an important precautionary measure which significantly reduces the possibility of introducing blackleg to an uninfected area. There are three fungicides registered for blackleg; iprodione, benomyl, and carbathiin. It is very important to use the recommended rates and treat uniformly.
4. If virulent blackleg is found on your land, destroy the crop debris by burning and/or ploughing below the soil surface. Keep the stubble buried and do not grow canola on the infected field or adjacent fields for a minimum of four years. Make sure volunteer canola and crucifer weeds are controlled effectively during the interval between canola crops.

"Canola researchers are now breeding for blackleg resistant," said Harrison. "However there are currently no completely resistance cultivars in the co-op tests, only partially resistant lines. Because resistant varieties will not be available for several years, it is critical that farmers apply recommended control measures."

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Contact: Lorraine Harrison
835-2291

For immediate release

Weather forecast as close as the phone

After receiving more than 76,000 calls in 1987, it is clear Alberta's farm weather forecast service is useful to producers, says a provincial specialist.

Peter Dzikowski, Alberta Agriculture's weather resource specialist in Edmonton, says the annual Farm Weather Line service is beginning another season of operation this month providing producers with the most current weather information available.

Alberta Agriculture and Environment Canada's Atmospheric Environment Service will again be co-operating to provide the public with easy access to up-to-date agricultural weather forecasts.

The service will be offered out of four centres across the province. Lethbridge and Calgary information lines went into operation April 1, while Grande Prairie and Edmonton lines will begin service in mid-April.

The lines are not toll-free and the caller will be billed the normal long distance charge if calling from outside the local area.

Weather forecasts specific to each region will be updated at 5:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 4:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. each day.

The numbers to call are:

Grande Prairie	539-7654
Edmonton	468-9196
Calgary	295-1003
Lethbridge	328-RAIN (7246)

For more information contact Peter Dzikowski at 422-4385.

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Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

Editor's Note

The following two articles, "No region has monopoly on soil erosion" and "Soil salinity really strikes home" are written in support of National Soil Conservation Week which is being observed April 11 to 17. The week is designated annually to raise awareness of the importance of soil conservation practices.

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For immediate release

No one region has monopoly on soil erosion

Soil conservation is not only important in the commonly regarded high risk areas like wind-swept southern Alberta or the water-worn Peace River. It should be a concern in every region of the province, says a county agricultural service board fieldman.

Greg Paranich, with the County of Lamont in the parkland region east of Edmonton, says farmers and landowners in all areas should realize that development over the years has made more land susceptible to wind and water erosion.

He also urges agricultural service boards (ASBs) in every county and municipal district to make soil conservation practices a priority program. He says it is not just the landowner who is affected by cost of erosion problems. As conditions become worse, public utilities and ultimately every taxpayer, are affected.

"The soil is the most important natural resource that the agricultural industry has," says Paranich. "Like many other natural resources, soil is basically nonrecoverable, at least not once it has been severely degraded.

"Unlike many other natural resources, soil has the ability to be maintained, and to an extent improved, with proper management. Farmers, landowners and agricultural service boards have a mandate to conserve this sensitive and valuable resource."

Paranich who is promoting soil conservation efforts in Lamont county says when soil degradation through erosion is mentioned, thoughts go to the southern prairies, or to the "Dirty Thirties".

However, extensive soil erosion has been occurring through the 1980s and, even more shocking, throughout many parts of the province. He says the lessons learned and technology developed by our forefathers obviously are not being employed to manage our soils.

The fieldman says the removal of brush and trees as more land is brought into crop production has simply made many more acres susceptible to erosion problems. People may blame the problem on stronger winds or heavier rains, but in many cases land development is really at fault.

(Cont'd)

"As one example, the conservation efforts of the '50s and '60s saw a proliferation of field shelterbelts on developed agricultural land," he says. "Increased operations and equipment size, plus the boom time environment of the '70s, rallied around the cries of "more production" and "greater efficiency". Unfortunately, this seemed to be at odds with conservation efforts and philosophy.

"In today's agriculture industry many farmers don't give much thought to establishing shelterbelts, and in the worst cases, some are removing these protective shields because 'they're in the road' of progress."

Paranich says to experience serious soil erosion in the parkland region of northeastern Alberta is unacceptable. Despite ASB efforts to demonstrate soil conservation techniques through projects over many years, situations of serious soil abuse still occur in areas within the County of Lamont.

"Most recently, the county public works department had spent a significant amount of time and money in order to re-establish road ditches and clean out major culverts which had been filled with wind and water eroded soils," he says. "This sparked the Lamont ASB to re-examine its role in soil conservation efforts. While continuing our involvement in soil conservation programs, we will be improving our soil management awareness efforts."

The fieldman says initial landowner contacts will begin with those whose soil erosion problems are most severe, and are affecting public utilities such as roads and culverts. Demonstrations and tours with these people will help alleviate severe erosion and show that these efforts are of benefit to both the individual and the public.

The enforcement of the Soil Conservation Act has been considered by the Lamont ASB if instances of severe soil erosion are met with noncompliance. But Paranich says he expects a more active and visible ASB role in soil conservation will hopefully stir the same response by the farmers in the county.

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Contact: John Hermans
Conservation and Development Branch
422-4385

April 4, 1988

For immediate release

Editor's Note

Ron Svanes is a second-generation grain farmer near Carmangay, in the dryland farming region north of Lethbridge. Always considering himself a good land manager, he was concerned in the early 1980's by a growing problem of soil salinity on his 960-acre farm. Determined to correct the problem he sought advice and help from PFRA and Alberta Agriculture. By participating in research and demonstration projects and trying new farming techniques the problem on the Svanes farm is under control and hopefully in decline. Now an active campaigner for conservation efforts, the University of Alberta agriculture graduate prepared this column in support of National Soil Conservation Week, April 11 to 17, 1988.

Soil salinity really strikes home

By RON SVANES

After witnessing first hand how salinity can affect your land and reduce or eliminate crop production, it is abundantly clear soil conservation should be the concern of every farmer.

In the late 1960's saline seeps started to appear in low lying areas of my farm and continued to grow in size. Our farming practice at that time was a half crop/half summerfallow rotation. In many years the precipitation exceeded the storage capacity of the soils which increased the ground water flow and water table levels. This excess ground water, with dissolved salts, caused the water tables to rise to within about five feet of the surface in low lying areas.

Capillary action drew the water to the surface where the moisture evaporated, leaving the salts behind. What used to be some of our most productive areas were now saline seeps.

In 1983, I became interested in the work being done in the County of Warner on soil salinity and soil reclamation. After approaching the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) in the spring of 1984 they proceeded to drill water table wells on approximately 320 acres of the most severely affected areas of my farm.

(Cont'd)

From information received from drilling and monitoring these wells, PFRA and Alberta Agriculture located the source of the problem - the recharge areas and the saline seeps - the discharge areas.

To reclaim the saline seeps PFRA and Alberta Agriculture recommended seeding alfalfa on the dominant recharge areas. Alfalfa, being a deep-rooted crop, dries the subsoil and lowers the water table.

In 1985 and 1986 I seeded about 140 acres to alfalfa. From data gathered by monthly reading of the water table wells it has been noted that the subsurface soil has dried out and water table levels have stabilized and in some instances dropped.

The saline seeps that were previously white with salt accumulations are now supporting plant growth, even if it is kochia weed. It is hoped that eventually these areas will again become productive.

Alfalfa has additional benefits in that it increases the organic matter content of the soil and prevents wind and water erosion. I feel that alfalfa is a viable crop alternative on dryland as it addresses the problem of soil degradation while still returning an income which is comparable to other grain crops.

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Contact: John Hermans
Conservation and Development Branch
422-4385

For immediate release

National agricultural computer industry conference features top speakers from across Canada and the U.S.

Industry leaders, government representatives and members of the academic community will gather in Edmonton May 9 - 11, 1988, to take part in a national conference on computer management applications in agriculture.

Participants at "AMSDAV '88", the Agricultural Management Systems- Directions and Visions conference, will hear top speakers from across Canada and the U.S. discuss topics ranging from co-operative resource opportunities for research, development and marketing to new technology developments and operating environments for the 1990's.

Delegates will also have an opportunity to attend a special "pre-conference" session for an update on recent developments affecting agricultural computing.

Keynote speaker Dr. Alex Guy, former deputy minister of Saskatchewan's department of science and technology, will kick off the conference with a discussion on technology and innovation in agriculture.

Denzil Doyle, past president of Digital Equipment Corporation Canada, will present a seminar on strategic business planning for the computer industry, and Dr. J. Kendrick, one of the founders of the AGNET system at the University of Nebraska, will discuss the value of agricultural computer systems.

Other speakers include Dr. Brian Gaines, of the University of Calgary, an internationally renowned leader in expert systems and artificial intelligence and Dr. Wayne Pfieffer, of the University of Guelph, who will discuss the future of agricultural computing in Canada.

In addition, speakers from IBM Canada Ltd., Co-operative Projects, and Microsoft Canada Ltd. will outline new technologies and their impact on agricultural computing.

Organized by Alberta Agriculture, the University of Alberta and Olds College, this one-of-a-kind conference is targeted at software developers, marketers, extension professionals and researchers working in or providing computer-based products to the agriculture and agribusiness market.

(Cont'd)

Top speakers featured at national agriculture computer conference (cont'd)

Wilson Loree, conference chairman and head of Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch says the conference will benefit all sectors of the computer software and management industry.

"The conference will also explore opportunities in the private and public sectors for the co-operative research, development and marketing of computer-based products for agriculture."

Conference sponsors include IBM Canada Ltd., Co-operative Projects, Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Technology, Research and Telecommunications, the University of Alberta, Olds College and members of the agricultural computer software industry.

For more information, or to register for this conference, contact: Paul E. Gervais, conference co-ordinator, farm business management branch, Alberta Agriculture, Box 2000, Olds, AB, T0M 1P0 or phone 403-556-4240.

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Contact: Paul Gervais
556-4240

Sites selected for federal/provincial soil and crop research program

As many as 10 different sites have already been selected in Alberta's northeast agricultural region for research into ways to refine farming practices that will protect the soil and improve crop production at reduced input cost.

Plamondon, Lamont, Elk Point, Vermilion and Wainwright are some of the locations where federal and provincial agricultural specialists involved in a joint Canada/Alberta program will establish regular and field-scale research plots beginning this spring.

Zero and minimum tillage, legume plowdown, continuous cropping, fallow farming, and planting pulse crop varieties and annual forages are among methods to be studied in one component of the joint program announced in 1987.

Some $1 million from the Canada/Alberta Soil, Water and Cropping Research and Technology Transfer Agreement will be used for this research work, along with a separate $2 million in direct federal money for more basic soil and crop research.

The northeast region research work, known as Component A, is one aspect of the overall six-year agreement. Component B has been allocated a further $3 million under the plan to establish a series of province-wide conservation farming demonstrations projects.

Dr. Dave McAndrew, officer-in-charge of Agriculture Canada's Vegreville Soil and Crop Research Substation and Don Macyk, director of Alberta Agriculture's plant industry division in Edmonton serve as co-chairmen of Component A committee. This committee will oversee the Component A research projects.

"To date there hasn't been this type of research done in the northeast region," the co-chairmen stated in a joint announcement. "We have developed some fairly good crop production guidelines over the years, and we use research information from other similar regions, but there hasn't been the site-specific work done here.

(Cont'd)

"For the soil, water and climatic conditions in this region we need to determine our limitations, or the impact that certain farming techniques and cropping practices will have on our soil and water resources. There has been a need for this type of research for some time. Now, through this agreement, we have the resources to begin."

McAndrew says Component A is primarily a technical research program to be conducted jointly by Agriculture Canada and Alberta Agriculture scientists and specialists. However he says the results of this work will be available on an ongoing basis to all producers.

Because there can be a wide difference in soil types and growing conditions within the region, conservation and crop management practices need to be developed and demonstrated for each major soil/climate zone.

The proposal is to establish a regional soil and crop research program centred at the Vegreville substation over the six-year term of the agreement. Studies will be conducted to identify the specific cropping and management practices best suited to the wide variety of soil conditions.

The studies will include conventional plant nutrition, variety evaluation and normal agronomic studies.

In addition there will be more intensive work on improvement of problem soils by deep cultivation, chemical amendments and cropping patterns suited to various soil types.

"As well we will have research/demonstration plots carefully located throughout the region to test practices suited to specific conditions, and to demonstrate to producers within their communities the results of various techniques," says Macyk.

With much of the research planning work underway project advisors are aiming for an April start for establishment of research plots. Once the research and demonstration projects have been established, officials will be sponsoring field days and tours of the sites, as well as holding workshops and seminars and publishing reports to expose producers to all aspects of the soil conservation and cropping program.

(Cont'd)

The federal/provincial agreement which was spearheaded by Deputy Prime Minister Don Mazankowski, member of parliament for Vegreville, was announced last year by Federal Agriculture Minister John Wise and Alberta Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga.

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Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

Federal/provincial program to demonstrate conservation farming to producers

Some $3 million will be spent across the province over the next five years to develop and evaluate dozens of conservation farming demonstration projects for the benefit of Alberta producers.

The projects are part of a federal/provincial agricultural agreement signed last year, aimed at providing practical examples and information on how farmers can tackle soil and water management problems.

Farmers, agricultural service boards, farm organizations and agri-businesses from Pincher Creek to Peace River will be asked to suggest projects and participate in them once they are launched this spring.

The Canada/Alberta Soil, Water and Cropping Research and Technology Transfer Agreement was announced in 1987 with a $4 million budget. Some $3 million in the agreement budget was designated to a conservation farming demonstration and technology transfer program known as Component B.

The additional $1 million was allocated to Component A of the agreement, along with another $2 million in direct federal money. Component A funds will be used for a soil conservation and crop management research program in northeastern Alberta.

Paul Barlott, senior manager of resource conservation with Alberta Agriculture and Reg Adam, director of the Alberta division of Agriculture Canada's Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA), will act as co-chairmen of the Component B committee. The committee will oversee the development and evaluation of the various demonstration projects.

It is estimated on a province-wide basis that soil degradation including erosion by wind and water, soil salinity and organic matter decline, represents over $200 million per year in lost production and increased on-farm operating costs.

(Cont'd)

"With this program we hope to help reverse this trend through more research, on-farm demonstrations, technology transfer, and improved farmer awareness and education," the co-chairmen stated in a joint announcement. "We plan to develop and transfer appropriate conservation tillage and cropping technology which will minimize soil degradation and sustain economic crop production."

The province will be divided into three areas for the Component B program. Barlott says there will be one major applied research project and about 15 on-farm demonstration sites in each area.

Area A will include the south and south-central agriculture regions running from the U.S. border north to the Olds/Three Hills/Hanna districts. Area B will include the north central, northeast and northwest agriculture regions running from Red Deer north to the Barrhead/Athabasca/Lac La Biche districts and from the Saskatchewan border west to the foothills. Area C will include the Peace River Region.

"The projects will demonstrate a variety of conservation and management techniques such as reduced and conservation tillage, zero tillage, use of different crop varieties, legumes in rotation, snow trapping, liming, wind and water erosion control projects and others," says Barlott.

Adam points out, "Along with acting as demonstrations for farmers so they can see what these techniques can do, the sites will also be closely monitored over the term of the agreement and results recorded. We will be able to determine the cost of using these farming practices, as well as measure aspects such as soil fertility, soil moisture, rainfall and yields."

At the same time Component B will also be working with participating farmers to evaluate existing conservation farming operations.

"These are producers who normally use conservation farming practices in their routine operations," say the program co-chairmen. "We will be working with them to collect information on their input costs, yields, timing and nature of operations, kinds of machinery used and other factors."

Barlott says a large part of the Component B program is farmer education. Once the demonstration projects have been established officials will be sponsoring tours, holding information sessions and publishing reports to expose producers to practical conservation farming techniques.

(Cont'd)

It is expected the field work in establishing demonstration projects will get underway in April.

The federal/provincial agreement which was spearheaded by Deputy Prime Minister Don Mazankowski, member of parliament for Vegreville, was announced last year by Federal Agriculture Minister John Wise and Alberta Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga.

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April 12 deadline for potato marketing board plebiscite

The Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council has announced the deadline for voting in a plebiscite being held to decide on the establishment of a potato marketing board for Alberta. Registered voters will have until April 12, 1988 to submit their ballots on the proposed Alberta Potato Marketing Board to the Marketing Council office in Edmonton.

The plebiscite was initiated by the Marketing Council at the request of the Alberta Potato Commission, and was announced February 4. Registration forms were mailed to potato producers last month, and eligible producers were asked to register with the Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council by March 1 in order to receive a ballot for the vote.

Marketing Council General Manager Ken Smith noted that the proposed Alberta Potato Marketing Board is not related to the National Potato Marketing Agency recently endorsed by Agriculture Minister John Wise.

Mr. Smith stated, "If established, the national agency would promote the interests of potato growers across Canada through a variety of means, but would not be empowered to regulate prices or production. On the other hand, the primary responsibility of the proposed Alberta Potato Marketing Board would be to set and regulate the minimum prices paid for seed and table potatoes produced and sold in Alberta."

In addition to regulating prices, the proposed marketing board would assume all responsibilities and powers now vested in the Alberta Potato Commission. These would include the delivery of market development programs, research projects and field services, and the administration of the Advance Payment of Crops Act. The proposed Alberta plan would not restrict potato production, nor would it set prices for potatoes sold to processors.

The results of the plebiscite are to be released April 29, 1988.

-30-

Contact: Ken Smith
Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council
Phone: (403) 427-2164

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AGRI-NEWS

April 11, 1988

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

For immediate release

Spring soil test can save on fertilizer costs

With tests showing soil nitrogen levels in some areas running slightly higher than normal, Alberta farmers are advised a spring soil test could save them the cost of applying fertilizer they don't need.

An Alberta Agriculture soil fertility specialist in Edmonton says a summary of 1987 fall soil samples indicates the average soil test nitrogen level across Alberta is either greater than or about equal to previous years. Samples from fallow fields for most of the province indicate above normal soil nitrogen levels.

Len Kryzanowski, says with this past mild winter, the actual nitrogen levels may even be higher this spring.

Fall tests showed fallow fields for central Alberta appear to have the greatest accumulation, up to 50 per cent more soil nitrogen than last year or the long-term average (1962-1986). Fallow fields for other areas also contain higher levels of soil nitrogen than last year. Samples from stubble fields for much of the province also contain higher than normal levels of soil nitrogen, but the increase over last year is not as great as for fallow fields.

"If soil nitrogen levels are higher, farmers applying nitrogen fertilizer this spring at the same rate as last year may be over fertilizing," says Kryzanowski. "However, before a farmer considers reducing his nitrogen fertilizer application he should sample one or two fields.

Soil testing in the spring is an effective management tool for making fertilizer decisions but only if the sampling is done properly, he says. Soil tests measure the fertility level and can help in planning a fertilizer program. Soil testing will also help identify reasons for poor crop growth and assist in planning corrective action.

Although care needs to be taken in collecting the soil samples, the analyses results and recommendations can be available in less than a week.

Because the soil analyses results and recommendation report is only as good as the soil samples received, the specialist says a proper soil sampling procedure is needed.

(Cont'd)

Kryzanowski says there are several key points to remember:

1. Do not sample frozen or waterlogged areas.

2. Size up each area before sampling based on your past observations of variations in crop growth or yield, soil texture, color, slope, degree of erosion, drainage and past management of the field. Avoid unusual areas such as: dead or back furrows, old straw, hay, or manure piles, waterways, saline spots, eroded knolls and old fence rows. Separate samples should be taken from sizable areas where growth is significantly different from the rest of the field.

3. Sample between 10 to 20 places at random within the field in order to obtain a composite sample which is representative of the area to be tested. Large areas (greater than 60 acres) tend to have considerable soil variation, so these may need to be divided into smaller sampling units.

4. Depth of sampling is very important since crops can utilize nitrogen to a depth of 60 cm (24 inches) or more. Using a proper soil sampling tool, the samples should be taken at intervals of 0-15 cm (0-6 inches), 15-30 cm (6-12 inches) and 30-60 cm (12-24 inches). The subsamples from each depth (such as all the 0-15 cm subsamples from one field) should be mixed together to form a representative sample. The different depths must be kept separate and properly dried. Approximately 500 g of soil for each depth sampled is needed for analyses.

5. An information sheet needs to be fully completed noting any unusual problems and a duplicate copy should be kept for your records.

The soil samples should be sent to a reputable soil testing laboratory that uses recognized methods of soil analyses and bases their recommendations on Alberta research.

There are several private laboratories available to farmers. As well, the Alberta Agriculture Soils and Animal Nutrition Laboratory in Edmonton is the only government laboratory in the province providing soil testing services.

Most soil test reports provide the available nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and sulphur levels, pH, salt level, sodium, texture and free lime rating.

(Cont'd)

To obtain a soil sampling tool contact any Alberta Agriculture district office or fertilizer supply company.

For further information on soil sampling contact the Soils and Animal Nutrition Laboratory, 9th Floor, O.S. Longman Building, 6909 - 116 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 4P2 (telephone 436-9150, Rite No. 427-6362).

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Contact: Len Kryzanowski
436-9150

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

Spring rains critical to 1988 growing season

A late-March snow storm helped improve soil moisture in some parts of the province, but good spring rainfall will be needed to launch the 1988 growing season, says an Alberta Agriculture weather resource specialist.

Peter Dzikowski says timely rainfall is critical to alleviate the dry conditions affecting most parts of the province.

"The snowstorm around March 26 provided 20 to 30 millimetres (mm) of moisture to parts of central Alberta, but most of the province did not get amounts in excess of 10 mm," he says in his monthly weather report.

March precipitation totals varied from 8.9 mm at Grande Prairie, 43 per cent of normal, to 29.6 mm at Lloydminster, 178 per cent of normal.

During March, the foothills and the area from about Leduc to Calgary extending through Coronation to Lloydminster and Cold Lake received 20 to 30 mm of water. This amount of water will moisten surface soil layers, but can be lost to evaporation within a couple of weeks.

"For quite a few producers with dry soil, the chance of getting a good crop depends entirely on the co-operation of the weather providing rain when the crop needs it."

The conservation and development branch specialist says March weather gave the province an early spring, providing temperatures more typical of April.

Average temperatures for March were from 4 to 9 Celsius (C) above normal for the month. Temperatures that warm are usually found in April.

Most fields in central and northern Alberta were without snow cover through most of the month. The low spring runoff has left dugout water levels low in many areas.

"Hopefully the higher precipitation amounts received in March will continue through the summer," says Dzikowski. "The dry surface soil layers found in most agricultural areas of Alberta mean that crops will require good spring rains for germination.

(Cont'd)

Spring rains critical to 1988 growing season (cont'd)

"Also, soil moisture reserves at deeper soil layers are pretty low in some areas. Producers with little moisture in deeper soil layers face increased risk because crops will not be able to tolerate a prolonged dry period. If spring and summer rainfall is near or above normal and is well distributed throughout the growing season, then 1988 could be a good crop year."

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Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

For immediate release

Unique speaker to address farm safety conference

One of the most dynamic and unique speakers in North America will provide the keynote address for a national farm safety conference in Edmonton in June.

Dr. Shall Sinha, an author and consultant from the Edmonton-area community of Sherwood Park, will provide the opening address June 20 during the first day of presentations at the National Institute For Farm Safety Conference.

Sinha, an authority on the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, one of the most influential men of the 20th century, has given his motivational talk to international audiences.

Appearing as Gandhi, in traditional Indian costume, Sinha uses stories and humor from Gandhi's life to deliver a message of capitalizing on 'problems', winning people over, setting clear goals and objectives and dealing with stress.

His talk will set the stage for the more than 30 speakers scheduled to address the June 19 to 23 conference being hosted this year by Alberta Agriculture.

The National Institute for Farm Safety, Inc. (NIFS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving awareness, education and research activities in agricultural safety and health. Membership includes U.S, and Canadian agricultural safety leaders from universities, agricultural industries, businesses and organizations.

More than 150 delegates are expected to attend the conference which is being held for only the second time outside the United States. The conference theme is "Agricultural Safety and Health: A Growing Awareness". Pre-registration is requested by April 30.

The conference opens with a day-and-a-half devoted to business sessions involving the society's board of directors. The general membership sessions open June 20 following a welcome by Ben McEwen, Alberta Agriculture's deputy minister, Solomon Kyeremanteng, Alberta Agriculture's farm safety program manager and conference chairman, and Dr. Thomas Bean, of West Virginia University, NIFS president.

(Cont'd)

Subjects to be covered during three days of technical papers include improved awareness through training, improved awareness through the efforts of volunteer organizations, improved pesticide safety awareness through research, improved awareness through publishing projects, and professional development programs.

Speakers will include M.G. Hanford, senior vice-president Esso Chemical Canada, Slyvia McKinlay of Alberta Women's Institute, Dr. Betty Crown, Helena Perkins, Dr. Tee Guidotti and Shona Kelly of the University of Alberta, Rollin Schnieder of the University of Nebraska, Dr. Dennis Murphy and Michael Huizinga of Pennsylvania State University, Dr. Wilfried Hammer, Institute for Production Engineering, West Germany and John Meyers of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

For more information or conference registration forms contact Alberta Agriculture, Farm Safety Program, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6 or phone 427-2186.

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Contact: Jacqueline Galloway
427-2186

Editor's Note

The following two articles, "Farmers can make a soil conservation difference" and "Team approach tackles dryland salinity problem" were prepared in support of National Soil Conservation Week being observed April 11 to 17.

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For immediate release

Farmers can make a soil conservation difference

The efforts of individual farmers in the day-to-day management of their own land will make the difference in combating soil erosion and soil degradation problems, says a long-time Lethbridge area farmer.

Ike Lanier, whose family pioneered some of the soil protection measures in Alberta, says conservation associations and government agencies have an important role to play in developing programs and strategies for protecting resources, but it comes down to the farmer in the field who really calls the shots.

Lanier, who operates a 2,400 acre dryland cereal and oilseed farm, says there is now a third generation of his family maintaining a soil conservation ethic. His father, Thomas Lanier who homesteaded the farm in 1909, began many of the conservation practices, which Ike continued and improved upon when he took over the farm operation in 1954. He says the management techniques needed to protect the resource have been refined over the years.

"Farmers can make a difference," says Lanier. "Many have demonstrated in the past and will continue to show in the future the progress made in limiting soil erosion.

"My father made a difference and I have tried to follow his example. In the early years he lost some topsoil and I lost some topsoil, but we have lost very little in the last 15 years and none in the last eight. Our soils have begun to rebuild organic matter in both quantity and quality."

Lanier says his father adopted trash farming as quickly as equipment design allowed. Trash farming was developed in the 1920s and '30s to keep protective crop residue (trash) on the soil surface to provide protection from wind and water erosion. He recalls using some of the first equipment his dad owned.

"He first used a 24-foot vintage rod weeder pulled through heavy trash. We travelled across the field at two miles per hour and it required two men or three boys with forks walking behind it to keep it from plugging. That job made an impression on me."

(Cont'd)

Since those days the farming operation has moved gradually from half crop, half fallow to continuous cropping. This change eliminated any soil salinity problems on the farm, helped make more effective use of soil moisture and helped prevent soil erosion.

"With strong encouragement from my sons, Will and Rod, we have moved from minimum tillage to zero tillage," says Lanier. "Zero tillage may be more suitable for some soils and areas than others, but I happen to think if it works on our farm, it will work anywhere.

"It is possible that zero-till may have its own long-term problems that we are not aware of yet, but soil loss won't be one of them. We did not use any tillage operations in 1987. All of our cereals and oilseeds were seeded into stubble from the previous crop.

"We used a combination of herbicides to control weeds and replace tillage. Our hoe-type seed drills adequately disturb the soil in the seed row to allow the crop to establish. The results are very encouraging."

Lanier says the example of farm-scale conservation farming practices will lead other farmers to try the techniques. He says, however, that policies and incentives must be in place to encourage conservation farming.

"Many farmers have made significant progress towards protecting and rebuilding their soils, such as those involved in the Alberta Conservation Tillage Society and the Dryland Salinity Control Association," says Lanier. "However there are some fundamental social, political and economic factors that influence farmers to maintain traditional methods even while they watch their soil blow away.

"These factors must be modified to act as incentives for change rather than discourage it. If we eliminate policy roadblocks and economic hurdles and make it possible and profitable to change farming practices, it will happen."

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Contact: John Hermans
Conservation and Development Branch
422-4385

For immediate release

Team approach tackles dryland salinity problems

Dealing with major soil degradation problems requires a team approach says a southern Alberta farmer who heads a provincial soil conservation group.

Bill Norris of Warner, president of the Dryland Salinity Control Association (DSCA), says one man alone cannot effectively tackle major soil conservation issues.

He says farmers working together through bodies such as the Dryland Salinity Control Association can raise awareness of the problem and lobby for the type of research and technical assistance needed to control the problem through on-farm management.

"Soil degradation can only be addressed by a team effort of our conservation-minded farmers and federal and provincial governments," says Norris. "We as responsible people must stop mining our soils for short-term gain, and as taxpayers we are going to have to get involved now to ensure a plentiful supply of good food for future generations at a price they can afford."

Alberta has more than 500,000 acres of saline soil and some of the seeps are expanding at the rate of 10 per cent per year. To a large extent this saline expansion can be controlled through proper land management.

"The sad part of the whole thing is that accepted good farming practices of the past 40 years have turned some of the most productive areas of the farm into big saline seeps," says Norris. "That's why a group of farmers founded the Dryland Salinity Control Association to press for help in finding solutions to the problem.

"At present, the DSCA has five farm directors and a membership of 160 farmers. The DSCA is pushing to implement on-farm practise of soil degradation control by vegetative means."

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Vegetative control is a method of planting crops in an area where there is water buildup (recharge area), to utilize the moisture so that it doesn't move to lower lying areas where it comes to the surface and evaporates.

Evaporation causes a buildup of salts so that this discharge area leaves a white crust of salt (saline seep). Research has shown that for every acre of saline seep there are 10 acres of recharge area feeding it moisture.

"Continuous cropping is the least painful way for a farmer to adjust his farming practices in order to utilize the excess moisture in the recharge area," says the association president. "In many instances, especially to control the expansion of the seeps, this is all that is required. The large acreages involved in recharge areas - as many as five million acres if you apply the recharge area/saline seep ratio - make continuous cropping a realistic approach to the problem."

In areas where the water buildup in the recharge area is too great or too rapid to control with continuous cropping, planting forages, especially alfalfa, may be the answer. Alfalfa, because of its long tap root and longer growing season, has the ability to utilize much more water than grain crops.

"Today, Alberta Agriculture's conservation and development branch, the Alberta Research Council and Agriculture Canada's Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) have greatly refined their technology in salinity control," says Norris. "By drilling a minimum number of shallow wells, they can pinpoint the recharge areas. The drilled wells are monitored at regular intervals for two years to check the water buildup and directional flow so that a proper recommendation can be made as to the type of vegetation and the area involved.

"With the support and co-operation of the association these agencies have made tremendous progress in identifying the cause and scope of the problem and recommending appropriate control measures."

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Contact: John Hermans
Conservation and Development Branch
422-4385

For immediate release

Better canola breeds mean bigger bucks

Modest improvements in the per-acre-yield and oil content of canola are quite feasible and could result in millions of more dollars a year for Alberta canola growers and crushers, says Alberta research scientist Donald Woods..

Speaking to about 150 delegates at the third Farming for the Future Conference in Calgary, Dr. Woods, a researcher with the Agriculture Canada research station at Beaverlodge, estimated that a modest five per cent per acre increase in canola yields could generate an extra $4.5 million a year, or $4.50 an acre, for canola farmers in Alberta's Peace River Region, which currently produces about $90 million worth of canola annually.

Similarly, a 0.5 per cent increase in the plant's oil content could be worth from $3 to $5 per tonne to crushers, resulting in another $360,000 to $600,000 annually for the industry, he said.

"An increase in yield of five per cent is quite a conservative goal, and the increased returns require no extra inputs from the farmer," said Woods, who is involved in a canola breeding program at Beaverlodge.

Since 1986 Woods and fellow researchers at the station have been attempting to develop higher-yielding varieties of canola specifically adapted to Alberta's Peace River Region and southern drylands.

Woods said to date the program has focused on three varieties of canola: Brassica campestris, grown in the Peace River Region; and Brassica napus (Argentine canola), and Brassica juncea (oilseed mustard), both grown in southern Alberta.

Improvements in yield and oil content can be made with B. campestris, said Woods, though work is still needed to bring it up to marketable standards. One particularly heartening characteristic of this breed is its resistance to white rust or staghead, he said.

"Every line tested at Beaverlodge is checked for resistance to this disease," said Woods, who holds a PhD in plant science from the University of Manitoba. "So unless there is a change in the disease itself, farmers should not see this particular disease to any significant extent in the future."

(Cont'd)

As for Argentine canola, Woods said he is experimenting with several varieties from Sweden and Europe in hopes of developing a hardy winter cross and a sturdy-strawed variety for use with irrigation.

Research on oilseed mustard entails the breeding of a high-yield, high oil variety that is low in erucic acid and glucosinolates. The removal of glucosinates from the seed would enable a higher percentage of canola meal to be used in animal feed, thus expanding this market, said Woods. Early trials indicate the B. juncea species of oilseed mustard is well-adapted to the drylands, he added.

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Contact: Dr. Yilma Teklemariam
Farming for the Future
427-1956

For immediate release

Alberta can grab share of value-added processing market

By developing value-added products from its grains, Alberta could tap into North American's more than $20 billion-a-year food ingredient industry, says the chairman of the Alberta Food Industry Advisory Committee.

"Everybody knows Alberta's traditional grain markets are drying up as the Third World improves its wheat production," said Sandy Bibby, who is also the vice-president of Edmonton's UFL Foods Inc., one of Canada's leading suppliers of food ingredients.

Speaking to about 150 farmers and researchers attending the recent Alberta Agriculture's Farming for the Future Conference in Calgary, Bibby said this province must enter the newly emerging, so-called "agro-industry" if its agricultural industry is to survive.

The agro-industry basically entails the processing of grains into food and pharmaceutical ingredients. He said for example, in Finland the government is building a $65 million plant which will process 450 tons of barley a day into starch, protein, ethanol, molasses, fibre and feed for use by that country's distilling industry.

"Alberta has a tremendous opportunity to build an agro-industry," said the England-born Bibby, who has sold food ingredients for companies throughout the world. "We have all the raw materials: cheap fuel; clean water; technology; and the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund to finance development projects."

Bibby pointed out that his own company was given an award by Canadian Institute of Food Science and Technology for its development of a unique form of flour derived from mustard seeds and used in salad dressings and sauces. In 1981 UFL built a plant in Warner, Alberta, to process the new "deheated" flour, and now exports the product to Scandinavia, Europe, the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia and the U.S.

(Cont'd)

Alberta can grab share of value-added processing market(cont'd)

Bibby said, more recently, UFL worked with Alberta Agriculture and the University of Alberta to develop a new dry extruder for the production of bread crumbs, pea soup powder and other types of grain-based food ingredients.

"The research done by the U of A has resulted in a dry extrusion process that is superior to any other in the world that we know of," said Bibby. "Thanks to this process, UFL has found new uses for several Alberta grains, including oats and barley, and we are now buying 30 tonnes of wheat a month from an Alberta miller."

If Alberta wanted to, said Bibby, it could create a vibrant agro-industry and in so doing become the "Nutrient Valley" of Canada.

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Contact: Dr. Yilma Teklemariam
Farming for the Future
427-1956

For Immediate release

Veterinarian joins pathology branch staff

A veterinarian who has done extensive work in investigating the cause and cure for bacterial pneumonia in cattle has joined the animal section of Alberta Agriculture's pathology branch in Edmonton.

Dr. Stephen Groom has been involved in post-graduate training and investigations into the role of the bacteria known as Hemophilus somnus in bovine respiratory tract disease, since 1982.

As a pathologist with the department in Edmonton, Groom's work will involve all classes of food producing livestock including swine, sheep and dairy cattle, although his main area of interest will be beef cattle.

Groom earned a bachelor of science degree with distinction in 1975 from the University of Guelph, and a doctor of veterinary medicine (DVM) from the Ontario Veterinary College with honors in 1979.

After graduation, Groom practiced in a mixed animal practice in Fort Francis, Ontario for three years prior to returning to postgraduate studies in the department of pathology, Ontario Veterinary College,

He received a diploma in veterinary pathology in 1983, master of science degree in 1985 and at present is in the final stages of defending his PhD thesis.

Research activities were on Hemophilus somnus in the bovine respiratory tract and trialing of a Hemophilus somnus commercial vaccine.

Groom brings to the department extensive investigational research background in addressing the role of bacteria in the bovine respiratory tract.

Hemophilus respiratory infection is of emerging importance in Alberta cattle. Groom's experience along with his extensive training in pathology will complement the existing expertise within the pathology branch and increase the benefit to Alberta food animal producers.

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Contact: Dr. Steve Groom
436-8904

April 11, 1988
For immediate release

Tissue culture specialist joins Alberta Agriculture

A native of Poland who received his master of science degree from the University of Alberta in Edmonton has been named a tissue culture specialist with the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre.

Kris Pruski, 35, who developed this high technology plant propagation program for Alberta Agriculture as part of his work for a master's degree, has joined the department on a full-time basis.

Tissue culture invclves taking small pieces of plant tissue, such as part of a bud, and duplicating or cloning those pieces through a series of lab procedures to create new plants. It is estimated that in using this process as many as one million plants can be created from a single bud in 12 months.

The process is usually used on those plant varieties which are difficult to propagate.

In announcing the appointment, George Grainger, director of the department's facility in northeast Edmonton, said Pruski will be principally using the micro propagation technique for saskatoons, chrysanthemums, geraniums and seed potatoes.

Pruski was born in Poland in 1953 and graduated from the University of Warsaw agriculture program in 1976. He worked in a greenhouse which produced cut flowers and tomatoes for several years, before immigrating to Canada in 1982.

In 1984 he began work on his master's project, the micro propagation of saskatoons. He completed the project at the tree nursery and horticulture centre and received his MSc in 1986.

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Contact: George Grainger
472-6043

Agri-News Briefs

IRRIGATION CENSUS CONTINUES THROUGH APRIL

The Statistics Branch of Alberta Agriculture reminds irrigation farmers across Alberta that the irrigation census is continuing to the end April. The census applies to all irrigators within irrigation districts and those privately licensed by Alberta Environment. A full month's extension was provided especially to accommodate hundreds of farmers who received only the one-page questionnaire which has to be returned in order to receive the full census forms if irrigation water is used for cropping or livestock operations. Stamped, self-addressed envelopes are provided for the farmer's convenience. All census forms returned by April 30 will be used in the composite analysis and all irrigation farmers who request the census results will be provided with the information. Preliminary results are expected to be available in the fall of 1988. The Irrigation Census is the first comprehensive statistical study to be made of the irrigation industry in Alberta.

HIGHWAY CLEAN-UP SLATED FOR MAY 7

Alberta 4-H members will be part of the crew out on provincial highways May 7 for the annual clean-up campaign. The 4-H members will join forces with the Junior Forest Wardens for the project which last year produced 63,000 bags of garbage collected by more than 9,000 young people. Each 4-H club contracts with Alberta Transportation to clean about 10 miles of roadside. Each club receives $30 per mile. Most of the money is used to fund club events or is donated to a worthy cause. Deadline for clubs wishing to sign-up is April 15. For more information contact a club leader or regional 4-H office.

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RESEARCH CONFERENCE SUMMARY AVAILABLE

Anyone who was unable to attend the 1988 Farming for the Future Conference in Calgary can obtain a copy of all papers presented. The proceedings binder includes the remarks made by researchers and agri-businesses who have used Farming for the Future Funds for various projects. Papers include Dr. Leonard Bauer discussing farm business management; Dr. Frank Aherne discussing sow feed intake and reproductive efficiency; Dr. Don Woods discussing canola breeding work in Alberta; Ross McKenzie, discussing the fertilizer component in cropping systems; Dr. Art Olson, discussing Agriculture Canada's research plans; Sandy Bibby discussing value-added processing; Dr. Susan Wilson discussing a study on bovine respiratory disease (shipping fever); Ray Grimson discussing applied research work in the feedlot; John Tackaberry discussing some on-farm demonstration projects and other related support material. For a copy of the proceedings, available at a cost of $10 each, contact: Alberta Agriculture, Farming for the Future office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6 or phone Dr. Yilma Teklemariam at 427-1956. Cheques should be made payable to the Alberta Research Institute of Alberta Agriculture.

FEEDERS' DAY AT U OF A

The University of Alberta is planning its 67th Annual Feeder's Day for June 1. This year's program which focuses on dairy farming, involves farm tours, displays, demonstrations, technical presentations, a problem solving session and a barbecue. For more information on the event held at the University of Alberta farm in Edmonton phone 432-3232.

BEEF MANAGEMENT GUIDE AVAILABLE

Now that the second printing is complete, copies of Alberta Agriculture's new Beef Herd Management Reference Guide are available for distribution. The comprehensive 800-page home study course, which sells for $35, covers all areas of beef production from herd health to financial management. The first printing of 2,000 copies, released just before Christmas, was sold out within about three months prompting a second printing of another 2,000 copies. For more information contact any Alberta Agriculture district office, or the home study office in Edmonton at 427-2404.

Agriculture Coming Events

National Soil Conservation Week
Special Alberta events.....April 11 - 17
John Hermans - Edmonton - 422-4385

Alberta Pork Producers Marketing Board Annual Meeting
Centre Suite Hotel
Edmonton, Alberta.....April 12 - 14
Bill Owen - Edmonton - 474-8288

Free Trade Conference
"Free Trade - Your Future is Your Concern - Be Informed"
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....April 12
Extension Services - Olds - 556-8344

Alberta Galloway Association Test Station Bull Sale
Brooks Livestock Auction
Brooks, Alberta.....April 13
Gina Sell - Ardrossan - 922-5531

Alberta Agricultural Economics Association - Annual Conference
Red Deer, Alberta.....April 13 - 14
Linda Chase Wilde - 432-5694

Aggie Days (School Tours)
Stampede Park
Calgary, Alberta.....April 14 - 15
Ag. Dept. Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Assoc. - 261-0266

Holstein Canada National Convention
Skyline and Palliser Hotels
Calgary, Alberta.....April 15 - 21
Isabel McPherson - Calgary - 291-0325

Spring Dairy Classic - Holstein '88
Stampede Grounds and Skyline Hotel
Calgary, Alberta.....April 15 - 16
Isabel McPherson - 291-0325

Wetlands, Wildlife and Agriculture Conference
Edmonton Inn
Edmonton, Alberta.....April 19 - 20
David Neilson - 422-4385

Alberta Food Processors Association Annual Meeting/Free Trade Forum
Convention Centre
Edmonton, Alberta.....May 26
Paul Murphy - Edmonton - 453-3587

(Cont'd)

Serger Workshop - Overlock Serger
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....May 27 - 29
Extension Services - Olds - 556-8344

Sixth Annual I.W.R.A. World Water Congress on Water Resources
Ottawa, Ontario.....May 29 - June 3
Larry Spiess - Akos Pungor - Lethbridge - 381-5152 - 381-5140

Agricultural Workshop for Lenders
Alumni Centre, Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....May 30 to June 3
Garth Nickorick - Olds - 556-4247

4-H on Parade
Stampede Park
Calgary, Alberta.....June 3 - 6
Ag. Dept. Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Association - 261-0266

Canadian Association for Rural Studies
University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario.....June 6 - 8
Max Hedley - Windsor - (519) 253-4232

Alberta Institute of Agrologists Annual Meeting
The Lodge Hotel
Medicine Hat, Alberta.....June 10 - 11
Rudy Esau - Brooks - 362-3391

Alberta Cattle Commission semi-annual meeting
The Lodge Hotel
Red Deer, Alberta.....June 14 - 15
Joanne Lemke - Calgary - 291-4800

Alberta Pork Congress
Westerner Atlaplex
Red Deer, Alberta.....June 14 - 16
Bill Owen - Edmonton - 474-8288

National Institute of Farm Safety, Inc.
1988 Conference
Hotel Convention Inn
Edmonton, Alberta.....June 19 - 24
Solomon Kyeremanteng - Edmonton - 427-2186

Canadian Water Resources Conference - 41st Annual
"New Technology in Water Resource Management"
Bessborough Hotel
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.....June 22 - 24
Glen Grismer - Saskatoon - (306) 665-6887

(Cont'd)

American Dairy Science Association Annual Conference
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta.....June 26 - 29
Dairy Processing Branch - Wetaskiwin - 429-2735

Edmonton Regional 4-H Show and Sale
Edmonton Northlands Agricom
Edmonton, Alberta.....July 7 - 8
Dave Hutton - Edmonton - 471-7112

Calgary Exhibition and Stampede - International Stock Show
Stampede Park
Calgary, Alberta.....July 8 to 17
Ag. Dept. Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Association - 261-0266

Fibre Week
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....July 10 - 15
Extension Services - Olds - 556-8344

Alberta Provincial Agricultural Service Board Tour
Josephburg - Moyer Recreation Complex
County of Strathcona, Alberta.....July 11 - 14
Ian Gray - 464-8113 or Don England - 939-4321

Interior Plantscape Seminar and Tradeshow
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....July 15 - 16
Annelise Doolaege - Olds - 556-8240

Canadian Galloway Association Annual Meeting
Tropical Inn
North Battleford, Saskatchewan.....July 16
Robert Ballantyne - Saskatchewan - 845-2481

Alberta Women's Week
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....July 18 - 20
Randi Sandbu - 352-1307

Edmonton Klondike Days Exposition
Edmonton Northlands/City of Edmonton
Edmonton, Alberta.....July 21 - 30
Dave Hutton - Edmonton - 471-7112

Klondike Days Horse Extravaganza
Edmonton Northlands
Edmonton, Alberta.....July 21 - 30
Dave Hutton - Edmonton - 471-7112

(Cont'd)

Alberta Heavy Horse Improvement Program
Alberta Challenge of the Breeds
Edmonton Northlands
Edmonton, Alberta.....July 21 - 25
Dave Hutton - Edmonton - 471-7112

Hort Week - 1988 - 24th Annual
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....July 25 - 29
Annelise Doolaege - Olds - 556-8240

Alberta Dairy Congress
Leduc Curling Club
Leduc, Alberta.....July 26 - 27
Iris Yanish - Leduc - 986-8108

Soil and Water Conservation Society - 43rd Annual Conference
Columbus, Ohio.....July 31 - August 3
John Hermans - Edmonton - 422-4385

Serger Workshop - Overlock Serger
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....August 12 - 14
Extension Services - Olds - 556-8344

International Conference on Dryland Farming
Amarillo/Bushland, Texas.....August 15 - 19
U.S.D.A. Conservation and Production Research Laboratory
P.O. Drawer 10, Bushland, Texas, 79012, U.S.A.

Agriculture Institute of Canada - 1988 Conference
University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta.....August 21 - 24
Don Hoover - Edmonton - 421-3611

Food Pacific '88
B.C. Place
Vancouver, B.C.....August 30 - September 2
Wilf Walker - Edmonton - 427-4241

Serger Workshop - Creative Serger
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....October 21 - 23
Extension Services - Olds - 556-8344

Wool and Mohair Workshop
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....November
Extention Services - Olds - 556-8344

(Cont'd)

Agriculture Education Convention
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....November
Extension Services - Olds - 556-8344

Alberta Horticultural Congress - Second Annual
Terrace Hotel
Edmonton, Alberta.....November 3 - 5
Lloyd Hausher - Brooks - 363-3391

Northlands Farmfair
Northlands Agricom
Edmonton, Alberta.....November 3 - 12
Dave Hutton - Edmonton - 471-7112

International Irrigation Exposition and Technical Conference
"Making Deserts Bloom Worldwide - Panacea or Pandora's Box?"
Las Vegas, Nevada..... November 6 - 9
Akos Pungor - Lethbridge - 381-5140

Canadian Finals Rodeo
Northlands Coliseum
Edmonton, Alberta..... November 9 - 13
Dave Hutton - Edmonton - 471-7112

Texas-Alberta Longhorn Show
Northlands Agricom
Edmonton, Alberta.....November 9
Dave Hutton - Edmonton - 471-7112

Agricultual Fieldman Inservice Training Course
Capilano Motor Inn
Edmonton, Alberta.....November 21 - 25
Dennis Bergheim - St. Paul - 645-3301

Population Growth in Southern Alberta -
Is There a Water Crisis Coming?"
Lethbridge Lodge Hotel
Lethbridge, Alberta.....November 21 - 23
Jim Webber - Brooks - 362-4532; Akos Pungor - Lethbridge - 381-5145

Canadian Western Agribition
Regina Exhibition Grounds
Regina, Saskatchewan.....November 26 - December 2
Mark Allan - Regina - (306) 565-0565

Coming Agriculture Events (cont'd)

Coming Agricultural Events

1. Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions coming in August September October November 1988 or any events omitted in the attached list? Please state the name of the event.

2. What are the dates? Please be sure to state whether 1988 or 1989.

3. Where is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

4. Please give the name, city or town, and phone number of a contact person for each event listed.

5. This form has been completed by (organization):

Please return this form by July 4, 1988 to:

Print Media Branch
Information Services Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5T6

(Coming Agricultural Events is published four times a year in Agri-News. The next edition will be printed July 11, 1988.)

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EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

April 18, 1988
For immediate release

1988 crop protection guide available

The 1988 edition of Alberta Agriculture's chemical crop protection guide, commonly referred to as the "Blue Book" is now available for distribution to farmers.

The 200-page soft covered book is a thorough directory of herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticides licensed for use in Alberta.

The guide lists both the chemical and brand name of the agents available, describes the type of weeds, insects, diseases or other crop pests they will control, explains mixing instructions and application rates as well as limitations, warnings and cautions which should be observed.

Keith Price, head of the department's crop protection branch, says at time of publication the information contained in the Blue Book is as current and accurate as possible. However, he says the overriding rule is to cross-check information in the book with the recommendations listed on the product label.

"The Guide to Crop Protection in Alberta is a reliable source of information that farmers have used for many years," he says. "But we always advise people that because of the possibility of changes or other factors that may occur after the guide has been published, they should also consult and follow the information on the packaging which has been provided by the chemical manufacturers."

The Blue Book is revised annually to reflect any new products on the market, changes in chemical formulations, recommended uses or product licensing.

Price says any producers using chemicals to control weeds, insects, diseases, or rodents may obtain a copy of the 1988 guide which provides the most current information available at time of publication.

(Cont'd)

Along with changes involving chemicals and their uses, the 1988 crop protection guide also has an expanded section on safety precautions and use and care of protective clothing to be worn when handling chemicals.

Diagrams showing the growth stages of cereal crops has been added and changes made to 'selector charts' in the back of the book. The guide also this year lists the first licensed plant growth regulator.

The long-standing "Blue Book" will be complemented by the first edition of the "Red Book" The Guide to Crop Protection in Alberta Part 2 - Non Chemical Control, later this spring.

Price says the non chemical crop protection guide is in the final draft stage and should be off the press within a month.

Copies of the 1988 Blue Book (Catalogue # Agdex 606-1) are available free from any Alberta Agriculture district or regional office, from agricultural service board fieldmen, or from the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

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Contact: Shaffeek Ali
427-5324

For immediate release

"Super Tree" may not be a super deal

Although it all sounds good on paper, Alberta property owners are cautioned to think twice before buying an Australian "super tree" being promoted by a California company in many Alberta newspapers.

Brendan Casement, supervisor of the shelterbelt program at the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre in northeast Edmonton, says while the hybrid willow may grow well in the United States or southern Ontario there is no evidence to say it will grow in Alberta.

"This new super willow sounds great. It is claimed that it can grow up to 12 feet per year, makes a good shelterbelt, prevents soil erosion, reverses soil salinity, and is good animal fodder," he says.

"However, this tree is being offered to Albertans without any assurances that it is hardy. It has not been grown at any of the nurseries, test sites, or horticultural centres in the province so that all claims are conjecture.

"It probably can grow up to 12 feet in one year, given ideal growing conditions of adequate water, nutrients and growing season. But, our growing season is much shorter than that in Australia so we expect that it will grow proportionally less - or worse yet keep on growing too long into the fall and run the risk of the new growth being killed back by frost."

Casement says all other claims made for this willow can be made for plants available in the shelterbelt program - "and the willows in the shelterbelt program are available for about one-tenth the cost and they already have roots."

He also notes anyone planning to order a "super tree" must obtain, in advance, an import permit from Agriculture Canada.

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Contact: Brendan Casement
472-6043

Meat industry responds to lower fat, less salt demand

Both beef and pork industries have in the past 15 to 20 years responded to consumer demands for leaner meat products, says an Alberta Agriculture food and nutrition specialist.

Aileen Whitmore says studies show from the early 1970's to today the lean content in meats has increased by seven to 12 per cent. And much of the lean meat increase reflects a reduction in fat content.

"Excessive dietary fat has been implicated in coronary heart disease and certain kinds of cancer," says Whitmore. "Understandably consumers are shopping for lean meat in an effort to cut down on dietary fat. Different segments of the animal industry have taken steps to decrease the fat content in their products, although not exclusively for nutritional reasons."

The provincial specialist says Canada introduced a new beef carcass grading system in 1972 which was designed to encourage the production of leaner beef.

Over a 10-year period total lean output from beef carcasses increased by seven per cent. Whitmore says this change can probably be attributed to a general reduction in the stage of maturity at slaughter and to the use of later-fattening breeds in cross breeding programs.

"Research has confirmed that Canadian prime cuts of beef are substantially lower in fat content that their U.S. counterparts. Further revisions to the federal beef grading regulations were made in 1978 and 1986 to reflect this trend."

Looking at the pork industry, Whitmore says the most significant change in pork product composition has been in the amount of fat.

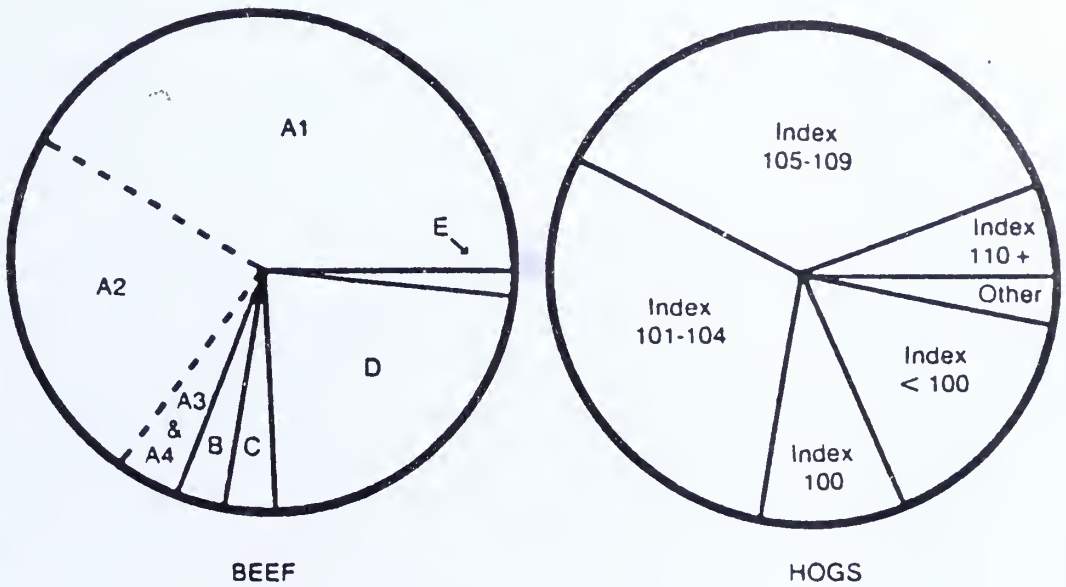
"A new grading system was introduced in 1968 which was based mostly on carcass weight and backfat thickness. Over the following 14 years, an increase of almost 12 per cent in lean pork output was observed, with both increased carcass weight and reduced carcass fat as contributory factors. Canadian pork retail cuts are lower in fat than published American ratios."

(Cont'd)

Meat industry responds to lower fat, less salt demand (cont'd)

The food and nutrition specialist also noted the industry has responded to a demand for reduced salt content in diets.

Based on recommendations that less salt reduces hypertension in some people, the industry is now producing processed meats such as bacon and ham with 25 per cent less sodium content compared to 25 years ago.



The diagrams show the proportion of carcass grades in Canada, in 1984. The vast majority of Canadian beef and hog carcasses graded in the leanest categories - A1 - A2 beef and 101 to 109 hog index range.

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Contact: Aileen Whitmore
427-2412

April 18, 1988
For immediate release

Custom services publications available

Alberta Agriculture has released a series of updated publications listing the latest information on custom services costs in the province.

The 1988 Custom Rates Survey Summary is a 24-page publication listing the spectrum of custom services provided to the agriculture industry in Alberta as well as the going rate for each service.

Garth Nikorick, an economist with the department's farm business management branch in Olds, says the summary is a good reference for planning and budgeting for the upcoming season.

Also available is the 1988 Directory of Custom Operators. This publication lists the company names and individuals who provide custom operation services.

As well, the "Farm Machinery Costs As A Guide To Custom Rates" for 1988 has also been released. It includes information on the operating and ownership costs of farm machinery. Nickorick says it represents one style of cost calculations that may be useful as a budgeting guide for 1988.

These publications are now available from any Alberta Agriculture district office or from the Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0. For more information contact Garth Nickorick at 556-4247.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
556-4247

For immediate release

Beef industry paid for higher cattle prices

The U.S. beef industry has paid dearly for the relatively good cattle prices enjoyed over the last few years, a Virginia college professor has told Alberta farmers.

Speaking to an Alberta Agriculture conference on market outlooks, Wayne Purcell said many U.S. beef producers had to go out of business before the market improved.

"We liquidated more than 33 million head of cattle between 1975 and 1988," he told the Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference in Calgary. "For too many years the price paid to producers was below the cost of production, which forced a lot of people out of business. We have paid high, for the prices we have today."

The professor of agricultural economics at Virginia Tech College in Blacksburg, Virginia said the U.S. beef herd has dropped from 132 million head in 1975 to 98 million head in 1988. He expected there will be at least one more year of herd reduction.

"We have the smallest beef herd in the United States since 1961. The price now is totally supply driven. The demand for beef has dropped steadily over the past eight to 10 years. Even if we were able to turn that demand trend around now, we would have trouble keeping the product in front of the consumer. It's as simple as - they can't eat it if they can't find it."

Purcell told the conference with 1987 demand little changed from 1986, it may indicate that the downward slide has stopped and demand may be increasing.

The director of the research institute on livestock pricing said the three main reasons for a drop in demand for beef include a change in lifestyle for American consumers, a more health conscious consumer concerned about diet, and a lack of new product development.

(Cont'd)

Beef industry paid for higher cattle prices (cont'd)

He said the industry has fallen behind in meeting the needs of the buying public. Rather than ask the consumer what they wanted and then producing a product to meet that need, the industry took a take-it-or-leave-it approach.

"We have not changed our products in more than 30 years," he said. "As an example 50 per cent of American homes have a microwave oven and we have yet to produce a beef product that looks decent when it comes out of the microwave."

The professor says by contrast the poultry industry has been making major gains in capturing market share. He says that industry has used technology to produce more meat at lower prices, making it more affordable for consumers. And they have invested in new product development.

"The cattle industry has had to go through a gut wrenching forced readjustment because of declining demand. Last year was the first year that retail demand did not decrease. We may have reached a point of stability or we may have to cut (the size of the industry) more."

He said the beef industry in the U.S. has now begun collecting a check-off which is channeled into a central fund to be used in product development and promotion.

A recent advertising campaign featuring actors James Garner and Cybill Shepherd is part of that promotion. Funds will also be directed toward developing new products.

As well he said for the industry to recover there will be a higher concentration of the food processing industry. He said there are three major companies now which control about 80 per cent of the market and he expected their hold will increased to 85 to 90 per cent over the next few years.

He also predicted a forced restructuring of the feedlot industry, as processors take over ownership of feedlots to more closely control production of the type of cattle they want. Purcell said this move will leave less room for the smaller independent feedlot owner.

(Cont'd)

"If we produce more beef we will sell more beef. But we have to produce a product that the consumers will want - a product they will find appealing."

The Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference was co-sponsored by Alberta Agriculture's market analysis branch and the Alberta Agriculture Economics Association

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Contact: Wayne Purcell
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For immediate release

Wheat, oat seeded acres expected to increase

With a forecast for small price increases and good delivery opportunities, the number of prairie acres seeded to wheat and oats are expected to increase slightly this year, says a former commissioner with the Canadian Wheat Board.

Dr. Jim Leibfried, who is a now a grain marketing consultant in Winnipeg, told a recent Alberta Agriculture conference in Calgary, that based on current market information, he expected barley seeded acreages to be down slightly this year and acreages for all other crops to be about the same as 1987.

Leibfried told the Accent 88 - Outlook Conference while there is some room for optimism, conditions just don't allow for a major price increase.

"There has been some price surge - from near nothing to a little better than nothing - for export wheat and Durum in recent weeks," he told the 250 farmers attending the conference. "If there is a relatively poor world crop, I don't think the U.S. Department of Agriculture could control world prices for 1988-89 and there would be meaningful price advances. But it that were to happen, watch out for the U.S. acres that would be turned loose for the 1989 wheat crop.

"All in all I think the odds are small for price advances for 1988-89 that would be more than enough to eliminate the need for another federal deficiency payment to put extra cash into the hands of farmers.

"If they did move to such an attractive level, I think increased U.S. acreage for 1989 and better world crops would soon dampen them. In other words, a real wheat and Durum price surge is a possibility but not a high probability in my view. If it did happen, I don't think it would be sustained for long."

(Cont'd)

Leibfried told farmers not to expect higher initial price levels for the new crop year for three reasons. He said first the 1987-88 price results are still unclear, second, higher prices would be like waving a red flag at the U.S. with its restricted acreage program and third, if stronger prices do materialize for an extended period they can be reflected in adjustments to initial prices.

Looking at 1988 prairie seeded acreages, the former commissioner who served from 1975 to 1985, said he didn't expect any major changes in the planting picture. About 58.2 million acres will be seeded to crops, with about 21.3 million acres in summerfallow.

"I expect to see seeded acreages for wheat (except Durum) and oats to rise somewhat this year given good delivery opportunities with lower farm carryovers in prospect," he said.

"Durum acreage may change little from the large acreage of last year given exceptional exports in 1987-88 and a small increase, if any, anticipated in farm carryover stocks. Barley acreage didn't decline in 1987 given the exceptional exports of 1986-87, but they may this year with a reduced export flow."

Leibfried predicted 28 million acres of wheat will be seeded this year compared to 27.3 million acres in 1987; 5.5 million acres of Durum wheat in 1988 compared to 5.4 million acres in 1987; 10 million acres of barley compared to 11.3 million acres in 1987; three million acres of oats compared to 2.5 million acres in 1987 and all other crops remaining at about 11.7 million acres.

The Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference was co-sponsored by Alberta Agriculture's market analysis branch and the Alberta Agriculture Economics Association

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Contact: Dr. Jim Leibfried
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For immediate release

Canola prices may be held down in 1988

Although 1988-89 canola prices aren't expected to set any records, one processor says there is a good long-term future for the oilseed industry in Alberta and Western Canada.

Dr. Stewart Campbell, vice-president, grain division, of Canbra Foods Ltd. in Lethbridge, told a recent Alberta Agriculture conference this year's weather will have the biggest impact on prices.

But he said the growing acceptance of canola oil in the food industry will increase demand for the product over the next decade.

Speaking to the ninth annual Accent '88 - Taking Stock Conference in Calgary, Stewart told farmers because of variables expected in this growing season they shouldn't plan to sell their crop all in one shot.

"Given the uncertainty of yields and harvest conditions, sales should be cautiously scaled in small parcels," he said. "As the canola crop develops in Canada, and the condition of the U.S. soybean crop becomes known sales can be increased.

"Assuming a reasonable output, crusher and elevator bids are expected to decline to about $240 per tonne for canola in the fall and recover in the New Year."

The Canbra spokesman said although there may be a price increase this spring, responding to a U.S. move to stimulate soybean plantings, the rally in canola will be limited.

He said short-term prices will depend on yields of soybeans from other major producing countries and the risk of a large stock carryover which could deliver cheap oilseed on the world market.

He said Western Canadian farmers are also expected to increase canola acreage by about 15 per cent this year. Quoting a United Grain Growers report he said farmers are expected to plant about 7.5 million acres this year compared to 6.6 million acres in 1987.

(Cont'd)

Canola prices may be held down in 1988 (cont'd)

Although the acreage is up, Stewart says yield is expected to be down to an average of 22.6 bushels per acre, representing about 3.87 million tonnes of oilseed in 1988. This compares with an average yield of 25.7 bushels per acre or 3.85 million tonnes in 1987.

The Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference was co-sponsored by Alberta Agriculture's market analysis branch and the Alberta Agriculture Economics Association.

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Contact: Dr. Stewart Campbell
327-5781

April 18, 1988
For immediate release

Growing worldwide demand for canola oil

Increasing domestic and worldwide demand for high quality, nutritionally sound vegetable oil should be good news over the next few years for Alberta's canola growers, says an industry observer.

Along with increased use here at home, Japan, Mexico, Europe and the United States are all buying more Canadian canola oil, says Dr. Stewart Campbell, a vice-president with Canbra Foods Ltd. in Lethbridge.

He told a recent Alberta Agriculture conference although prices may be weak over the short-term, the long-term market prospects were good.

The economist with Canbra's grain division, told the Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference international canola oil acceptance is growing.

After Japan, which imported 1.6 million tonnes of canola in 1986-87, Mexico is the next major buyer taking 319,000 tonnes last year. Similar export volumes are expected this year.

"Although Mexican demand is sensitive to factors such as the availability of competing sunflowers from the United States and Argentina, the foreign exchange and availability of credit, it appears that Mexico has become a regular consumer of Canadian canola."

He says there is also opportunity to increase canola oil sales to the United States.

"There is now growing recognition in the United States by food manufacturers, nutritionists and consumers of the health attributes of canola oil," said Stewart. "For Canadian crushers, the huge U.S. vegetable oil market presents 'the window of opportunity' for growth to 1990 and beyond."

The company executive said for Western Canadian crushers, the Western United States is an attractive target market. The western states used 1.7 million tonnes of vegetable oil in 1987, with almost all of the oil imported from other areas.

California alone consumes 635,000 tonnes of oil a year, of which 270,000 tonnes is in the salad oil format.

(Cont'd)

"Building upon our Canadian experience, we are confident that over time canola oil will capture significant markets in the United States, particularly in the form of a salad oil or liquid shortening," said Campbell.

The Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference was co-sponsored by Alberta Agriculture's market analysis branch and the Alberta Agriculture Economics Association

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Contact: Dr. Stewart Campbell
327-5781

For immediate release

Canola captures salad oil market

With a 78 per cent increase in domestic canola oil consumption in just the last seven years, a southern Alberta crusher says the future looks bright for Canadian canola growers.

Dr. Stewart Campbell, a vice-president with Canbra Foods Ltd. in Lethbridge, speaking to a recent market outlook conference in Calgary, said canola oil and canola meal will continue to capture a bigger share of the consumer vegetable oil and livestock feed markets.

From being a minor player a few years ago, canola has now captured 80 per cent of the Canadian salad oil market, he told the Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference. Canadian canola oil consumption has increased by 158,000 tonnes since 1980. Half of the increased canola consumption has replaced imports while the other half represents a net increase in consumption.

"Japanese and Canadian crushers are the two dominant competitors for our canola grown here in Western Canada," he told the 250 farmers attending the conference. "Since 1980, these two crushing industries have accounted for about 85 per cent of the annual purchases of canola. Japanese crushers have typically purchased 45 per cent and Canadian crushers 40 per cent of the annual output.

"But in the 1987 calendar year, crushing of canola in Canada exceeded canola exports to Japan for the first time. The rising importance of the Canadian crusher as a competitive buyer of your seed is impressive. It is, I believe, a significant statement of the future."

Campbell said in November, Canadian canola crushers set a new domestic crush record for a single month - 158,728 tonnes of seed. This pace continued into December bringing the year-end total to more than 1.6 million tonnes of canola seed processed by Canadian crushers in 1987.

Looking at canola meal, which is used as a protein supplement in livestock rations, the economist says meal consumption has risen to 104,000 tonnes or 30 per cent since 1980. Canola meal accounts for 25 per cent of all protein meal consumed in Canada.

(Cont'd)

"Today, Western Canadian crushers represent the most effective force growers have in the market place to create competition," said Stewart. "A healthy and growing industry in Western Canada and the two plants in Eastern Canada provides canola growers with a truly competitive environment for your canola production."

The Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference was co-sponsored by Alberta Agricultures market analysis branch and the Alberta Agriculture Economics Association

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Contact: Dr. Stewart Campbell
327-5781

April 18, 1988
For immediate release

Alternative crops generally offer good returns

Although there are a few variables, many of the alternative crops will continue to offer good returns to Alberta farmers in 1988, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Fred Boyce, speaking to the 1988 Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference in Calgary, told Alberta farmers the interest in alternative crops "has been little short of phenomenal".

In reviewing about eight of the major special crops for the recent market outlook conference, the market analyst said there will be generally good demand and reasonable prices for the next year.

"As few as five years ago, alternative crop acreage (excluding forage seeds) was only about one million acres across Western Canada," he told the 250 farmers attending the conference. "Last year, the figure was over two million acres and if forage seeds are included the total is probably somewhere between 2.5 and three million acres.

"By way of comparison, total rye and flax acreage combined was only 2.3 million acres. This year, I expect the dry pea acreage alone to exceed the one million acre mark."

Boyce said the strong interest in alternative crops can be credited to prices which generally are more attractive than prices for traditional cereals and oilseeds.

As well alternative crops provide immediate cash to producers, freedom from delivery concerns, enhanced quota allocation to traditional crops, and crops such as pulses and legumes can also improve the soil.

Looking at some of the more common alternative crops, the market analyst said dry field peas could be in the $5 per bushel range this year if exports to Europe continue.

Boyce said he expects lentil acreage to decline this year after four successive years of increases. He disagrees with some of the forecasts which predict as much as a 30 per cent decrease in prices.

(Cont'd)

He said contract prices for the new lentil crop generally range from 11 to 13 cents per pound and further declines are not expected. If weather problems develop prices could move to the 15 cent mark and higher.

The conference speaker said he expected little change in the fababean and dry bean markets. Demand has been good and there is little carryover.

"Little exchange is expected in fababean prices of around nine to 10 cent per pound. Dry colored beans will likely return to $18 to $20 per hundredweight to the grower."

Mustard prospects for the year have improved because of record export shipments during the past year, he said. More than 130,000 tonnes were exported in 1987, nearly 64 per cent more than in 1986. Traditional buyers increased their volumes, but a large sale to Bangladesh accounted for much of the increase.

"Strong export activity has reduced stocks to manageable levels and allowed grower prices to recover," Boyce said. "Contracts for 1988 range from 10 to 12 cents per pound which are about four cents better than a year ago. These prices should encourage more mustard acres this year."

He said demand for canaryseed has been good with exports of 80,000 tonnes in 1987. Current contract prices are in the eight to nine cent a pound range and could go as high as 10 cents a pound.

Safflower and sunflower seeds which are mainly used in the birdseed and confectionary trade have been in good demand. Boyce expects prices to hold in the 13 cent a pound range.

Buckwheat isn't a big crop in Alberta, he said. Manitoba is the main prairie producer and Japan is the primary buyer of Canadian buckwheat. Boyce said while there is little Alberta information to work with as a price indication, Manitoba is offering contracts in the 10 to 11 cent a pound range for 1988.

Looking at forage seeds, Boyce said he expects fairly good demand and prices to continue into 1988, with much of the seed produced being sold to the U.S. market. He said as seed production increases prices could drop in 1989.

(Cont'd)

Most of the Canadian forage seed will be used to seed as much as as 70 million acres of U.S. farmland to grass. Most of this acreage is crop-producing land the U.S. Department of Agriculture is taking out of production under different government programs.

Boyce predicted alfalfa prices to remain steady or drop a bit to about $1.30 per pound; bromegrass could decline to about $1 to $1.25 per pound; fescue may stay relatively firm at about 50 cents per pound; and timothy will decline to about 45 cents a pound.

Although clover prices are harder to assess, he expects alsike to bring a premium over red clover with prices in the 40 to 45 cent per pound range. Red clover may be in the 25 to 35 cent a pound range, and sweet clover will be in the 15 cent a pound range. Boyce noted that red and sweet clover used to seed land taken out of crop production, do not qualify for assistance under U.S. acreage reduction programs.

The Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference was co-sponsored by Alberta Agriculture's market analysis branch and the Alberta Agriculture Economics Association.

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Contact: Fred Boyce
427-5383

For immediate release

High protein wheat commands higher prices

Higher protein wheats generally command more money on the market, but they aren't without their drawbacks, Alberta farmers attending a recent market outlook conference have been told.

Dr. Bill Wilson, an economist with the University of North Dakota, told producers buyers have traditionally paid a premium price for high protein wheat, although there is a limit to what the market can bear.

As well, Wilson says, farmers have to weigh the value of earning extra dollars for a bushel of grain, against an expected reduction in yield from high protein varieties.

Wilson, speaking at the Alberta Agriculture Accent 88 - Taking Stock conference in Calgary, said with a more competitive international wheat market, the quality issue is becoming more and more important.

"Quality is perhaps of greater importance in today's wheat markets than has been the case in the past 20 or more years," he said. "An international grain buyer recently told me quality isn't an issue as long as everyone has the same quality available. But as quality of crops around the world become differentiated, then quality takes on greater importance as a component of competition."

He said while features such as cleanliness, hygiene, infestations, hard versus soft and uniformity also affect quality, high protein, in the 13 to 15 per cent range, is a major factor.

Wilson, an associate professor with the department of agricultural economics, told farmers there is a substantial change taking place in international wheat demand.

"In general, the shift is away from U.S. Hard Red Winter Wheat (HRW), while significant shifts are taking place in favor of the higher protein wheats such as Hard Red Spring Wheat (HRSW), Canadian Western Red Spring Wheat (CWRSW) and (the lower protein) soft wheats.

(Cont'd)

He said while there is still a strong demand for high protein wheat, through new milling and food processing techniques the world is also making more use of low protein wheats. In many cases processors can use a blend of the two wheats in food products.

Buyers have been paying higher premiums for higher protein wheat since the early 1950s. Today there is about a 34 per cent price difference between high protein wheat and lower protein wheat.

He said supply is the main reason for the dramatic increase in protein premiums. In recent years there has been a simultaneous reduction in protein levels in both the U.S. hard red winter wheat and hard red spring wheats and an increasing world demand for higher protein wheats.

Although he urged Alberta farmers to continue to produce high protein wheat, he noted there is a trade-off that has to be considered.

Wilson said many U.S. farmers have opted for higher yielding wheat instead of high protein varieties.

"From an agronomic perspective these high yielding grains are attractive for many U.S. producers," he said, in spite of the premium paid for high protein wheats.

"There has always been a trade off between protein and yield, but recent advances in breeding of HRW has made the trade off even greater. In other words the opportunity cost of increasing protein in terms of yield foregone, has increased. The recent high protein premiums will likely continue.

The economist, who received his PhD from the University of Manitoba, said the single most important factor affecting wheat protein levels is weather - April temperatures and precipitation for hard red winter wheat and July temperatures for hard red spring wheat.

The Accent 88 - Taking Stock Conference was co-sponsored by Alberta Agriculture's market analysis branch and the Alberta Agriculture Economics Association

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Contact: Dr. Bill Wilson
(415) 723-4716

For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

SECOND ANNUAL DAIRY CONGRESS PLANNED

The second annual Alberta Dairy Congress and Trade Show will be held in Leduc, July 26 -27. The specialized trade show will feature displays emphasizing the latest advances in equipment, products and management technology of interest throughout the dairy industry. In addition, educational seminars are planned both days to provide in-depth information to dairy producers in such areas as cow management, annual forage production and estate planning. The congress and trade show will be held at the Leduc Curling Club while at the same time the Western Canadian Classic Dairy Show will be held in a facility next to the curling club. For more information contact the dairy congress and trade show office in Leduc at 986-8108.

CORRAL GATE DESIGN OFFERS FLEXIBILITY

Cattlemen who have had to struggle with corral gates that sag or don't shut properly after a short period of use, should look at a new gate design recently published in Alberta Agriculture's Beef 'N' Bacon newsletter. The two designs, provided by Trevor Jones, the department's regional livestock specialist in Fairview, are simple and inexpensive to build. Working corrals can have from five to 15 gates depending on the number of sorts and general layout of the system. These gates are usually purchased metal gates or welded sucker rod and tubing. At prices of $150 each, gates can represent up to 35 per cent of material cost for a handling system. The two different designs of corral gates in the department newsletter can be made from planks or metal. They can be swung up to 300 degrees, and if the gate sags it can be jacked up and the top pin moved closer to the supporting post. For a copy of the design see the March 1988 Beef 'N' Bacon Newsletter available from either the department's Barrhead regional office at 674-3248 or the Red Deer regional office at 340-5336.

(Cont'd)

CANADIAN FOOD PRICES AMONG LOWEST

A basket of food that cost less than $50 in Ottawa would cost more than $120 in Tokyo according to a recent survey of 16 capital cities. The basket included a dozen eggs, a quart of whole milk and a quart of cooking oil, and one pound quantities of sirloin steak, roast pork, whole broilers, butter, cheddar cheese, potatoes, apples, oranges, flour, rice, sugar and coffee. The survey showed Tokyo had the most expensive food at $121.04. Bonn, West Germany was $54.60, Washington, D.C. was $49.74 and Ottawa was $47. Brasilia had the least expense with the groceries costing under $25. The average cost of all cities was just over $56. Comparing selected food items in the four prominent cities showed sirloin steak cost $48 a pound in Tokyo and $8.08 in Ottawa. Coffee cost $23.71 a pound in Tokyo and $10.90 in Bonn compared with $5.80 in Ottawa. On the other hand Ottawa residents paid more than Tokyo and Bonn residents for cheddar cheese and cooking oil, and more than Bonn and Washington, D.C. residents for chicken, oranges and flour. The survey was completed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

CARE NEEDED IN REARING SURPLUS PIGLETS

Hog producers faced with extra piglets from large litters or piglets orphaned because of a sow's death can raise the young animals although extra care is needed, says an Alberta Agriculture publication. In the most recent issue of the Beef 'N' Bacon Newsletter, specialists point out some of the factors to consider if a farmer is raising piglets artificially. The report notes that the piglets need to receive colostrum (first milk) as soon as possible after being born. As well they need accommodation that is clean, dry and not overcrowded; they need a feeding device that provides regular, controlled doses of food; and a good environment that is warm and has no drafts. For a copy of the full article on raising piglets artificially get the March 1988 issue of the Beef 'N' Bacon newsletter by calling the department's Barrhead regional office at 674-3248 or the Red Deer Regional office at 340-5336.

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AGRI-NEWS

CANADIANA
MAY 11 1988

April 25, 1988

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

For immediate release

Treated seed grain can be hazardous

Treated grains and oilseeds, can cause illness or death if accidentally consumed by livestock, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Dr. Roy Smith, a toxicologist with the department in Edmonton, says farmers should be careful in handling and storage of pesticide-treated seed stock to prevent any losses.

Smith says there have been instances where entire herds of cattle have died after getting into some treated seed. He says even dogs and cats are at risk.

"The experience of Alberta Agriculture's toxicology lab last year suggests that there is a growing problem with cattle gaining access to treated seed grain, often with disasterous consequences for both the cattle and for the farmer," he says.

"Treated seed grain is now second only to lead as a cause of cattle deaths by poisoning. Companion animals like dogs and cats are also dying after eating a small portion of treated grains or pelletized pesticide."

Smith says seed treatments involving lindane or carbofuran are those which most commonly cause animal deaths. Treated grains are usually dyed to alert the farmer a pesticide has been added to the crop.

The most common colors are blue and red, and canola seed is involved more frequently than any other. However, in some cases no dye is added to a treated seed and the seeds look perfectly normal.

"In some instances whole herds of cattle have been lost after well-meaning neighbors or other parties dump the excess and unplanted portion of the treated seed into a pasture without the knowledge or consent of the owner," he says.

"Cattlemen should be wary of mysterious piles of grain or canola in pastures and should take care to ensure that their own treated seed is stored in a secure place where neither farm animals nor family pets can possibly gain access to it."

(Cont'd)

The specialist says often the first animals to arrive at the site of a spill/dump are magpies and a cattleman should investigate whenever a flock of "very sorry looking or very sick or dead magpies are observed on the property."

However, he says warble control measures can also lead to sick magpies. In a typical case involving treated grain a dozen or more magpies may be affected.

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Contact: Roy Smith
427-3981

Soil committees are front-line planning forces

Following an example set by farmers and provincial specialists in south-central Alberta, more soil management committees are expected to spring up in Alberta to tackle the universal problem of soil degradation.

The Region II Soil Management Committee headquartered in Airdrie is the first in the province, and other regional committees are now in the planning stages.

The committees can act as the front-line planning forces that set the priorities, develop programs and promote farmer awareness of techniques which tackle problems such as wind and water erosion.

Committee membership includes farmers, district agriculturists, municipal agricultural service board fieldmen, and federal and provincial government specialists all dedicated to promoting soil conservation measures.

Larry Welsh, Alberta Agriculture's regional crop production specialist in Airdrie, and one of the founders of the south-central committee, says in the last six years the group has made a difference in reducing soil erosion. He says Alberta Agriculture's Region II has a wide range of soil degradation problems to tackle.

"Soils throughout Region II are tremendously diverse," says Welsh. "They include Brown, Dark Brown, Black and Grey Wooded soils. Moisture, temperature and crop growth vary greatly across these soil zones.

"Because of this variability we have examples of all the soil degradation problems. Serious wind and water erosion, increasing dryland soil salinity, decreasing soil organic matter and soil structure damage can be found in the region."

Welsh says these problems had long been recognized, but because they appeared to be getting worse, the Region II Soil Management Committee was formed in about 1982.

"The regional committee was deemed necessary to give the care, attention and supervision required to address the problems," says Welsh. "This local touch and ownership was formerly missing. The committee has representation from all parts of the region and from a number of different agencies. Farmer members are vital to provide the grassroots input necessary to ensure that programs and activities put into action are workable and practical."

(Cont'd)

When the committee was formed soil problems were priorized. Because wind erosion was present in all districts, it became the top priority. Most of the early projects initiated by the committee focused on preventing wind erosion.

Welsh says it became evident measures taken to prevent wind erosion also controlled other soil problems. For example, continuous cropping not only helps control wind erosion, but also prevents water erosion, retards the advancement of soil salinity and helps maintain soil organic matter levels.

"A logical solution to all these problems was for the committee to promote new conservation farming approaches," says the specialist. "The conventional farming methods using intensive tillage and black summerfallow appeared to be responsible for most of the soil degradation problems and some changes appeared necessary."

The Region II committee initiated a soil conservation project, in 1986 and continued in 1987. This project had several components. One component demonstrated the use of a conservation drill for direct drilling in fields with low levels of crop residue and which were susceptible to wind erosion if subjected to preseeding tillage. Two drills operating in Region II seeded 2,700 acres on 22 farms and offered farmers the opportunity to use and evaluate a conservation-type drill by renting a drill before spending a lot of money buying one.

A second component demonstrated a blade cultivator or "stubble mulcher" on 11 farms in the special areas as an alternative to the conventional cultivator. This project showed that more crop residue can be kept on the soil surface to protect against erosion by minimizing surface disturbance.

Welsh says one of the most successful soil conservation projects promoted use of the herbicide 2, 4-D in the fall to control winter annuals. This technique reduced the need for tillage operations the following summerfallow year, thereby maintaining a protective residue on the soil.

Demonstration fields are used for tours to spread the ideas to farmers outside the area.

Contact: Larry Welsh
948-8535

Marketing sector managers complete job exchange

Two senior managers with Alberta Agriculture's marketing sector in Edmonton are back at their old jobs after a 30-month exchange designed to let them learn the business from each other's perspective.

Cliff Wulff has returned to his former office as executive director of market development, while Dennis Glover is back at the helm as director of marketing services.

As the titles suggest both offices are involved in the overall task of developing and marketing Alberta's agriculture commodities and processed foods, although each has a specific role in achieving that goal.

Market development focuses on finding and expanding trade opportunities for agricultural products and processed foods on an international scale, while marketing services works closely with Alberta food processors and manufacturers, producer groups and commodity associations and contributes to development of provincial agriculture policy.

In 1986, acting on a mutual request from the two managers, assistant deputy minister Barry Mehr approved the 30-month exchange, which saw Wulff move into marketing services and Glover into market development.

While the two divisions have special interests they rely on each other's services. On one hand there would be a lot less demand for Alberta's processed foods if there were no international buyers. (The province now exports about $1.6 billion worth of agriculture products a year.) And on the other side, it would be pointless to try and develop worldwide export markets if the province wasn't able to produce high quality agricultural commodities and processed goods for sale.

The objective of the exchange was to broaden the experience of both managers and ultimately better serve the province's agriculture and food processing industry.

"I was raised in Alberta, and grew up here, but I didn't really know the local industry," says Wulff, who had headed the department's team of international trade directors for three years before moving into marketing services.

(Cont'd)

Marketing sector managers complete job exchange (cont'd)

"Now after working with Alberta's food processing industry for the last two-and-a-half years I feel I have a much better understanding of the scope and potential that exists in the industry."

In assessing his term as executive director of market development, Glover said the experience broadened his understanding of the complexity of developing international markets.

"After seven years as head of marketing services I was confident Alberta had the talent to produce a wide range of top quality agricultural commodities and food and beverage products, but I didn't fully appreciate the challenge of working in international markets," said Glover.

"It's an intense, exciting area that puts you in contact with many foreign contacts and allows you to learn the nature of business on a world scale."

Both directors says the 30-month exchange has given them a better understanding of industry problems and potential and will allow them to better use the services of each other's divisions.

They say by better co-ordinating the efforts of the two divisions the department will be able to improve service to the agriculture and food processing industry.

In his assessment of the exchange, assistant deputy minister Mehr, says, "This interchange of directorships has proven to be completely successful as a development exercise and as an exercise to improve the marketing sector's delivery of service to our clients. The two managers returning to their respective responsibilities will enhance our services to industry."

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Contact: Cliff Wulff - 427-4241
Dennis Glover - 427-3166

For immediate release

Space Age Agriculture launched

Space Age Agriculture isn't a story about farming on Jupiter - it's the latest educational material available for junior high grades showing how high technology and international issues can affect everyday living.

The two-part course has just been released by Alberta Agriculture for use in its extensive education series - Agriculture in the Classroom program.

Space Age Agriculture, developed for Grades 7 to 9, is designed to complement the new social studies and science curriculums recently developed by Alberta Education for use in provincial schools.

The highly motivational lessons in these two subject areas use agriculture as the basis to describe sophisticated scientific developments and the impact of international affairs.

Betty Gabert, co-ordinator of the Agriculture in the Classroom program says agriculture is used to develop the concepts which students can apply in many other areas.

The two handbooks, which are being released in a pilot edition for the 1988-89 school year, encourage students to view agriculture from a global perspective.

The Space Age Agriculture - Science course has 12 different activities which will involve students in projects ranging from a study of modern agricultural research, to the impact rain has on plant growth, to pasteurization of milk, to consumer issues, and vegetative propagation techniques.

There are 16 activities in the social studies course. They include a study of agriculture in Canada and Brazil, the effect the news media has on agriculture, social goals and agriculture, seeing agriculture as a business and international trade issues.

With the release of these two courses, the Agriculture in the Classroom program now has educational material available for Grades 1 through 9 in Alberta.

(Cont'd)

Themes developed under the program include Agriculture and Me, Pride in Alberta and Space Age Agriculture.

Gabert says writers are now working on The Business of Agriculture, the final theme in the series designed for Grades 10 to 12, which should be ready for publication in early 1989.

All course material developed by the department is designed as resource handbooks to be used by teachers in the classroom. The department also offers in-service training to explain to teachers how to get maximum benefit from the material provided.

For more information on the latest courses or the Agriculture in the Classroom program contact Betty Gabert at the agriculture education branch in Edmonton at the 427-2403.

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Contact: Betty Gabert
427-2403

Programs benefit Alberta farmers and the unemployed

Alberta farmers or farm organizations needing extra short or long-term help this year should consider some of the employment assistance programs offered by Alberta Career Development and Employment.

Programs offered by the provincial government department provide different levels of assistance to employers to hire new workers for a variety of eligible projects.

Alex Ostapiuk, a farm management economist with Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch in Olds, says the double objective of the programs, is to create jobs for those who are unemployed, while at the same time providing farmers and other businessmen and women with financial assistance to complete approved projects.

Ostapiuk describes some of the main guidelines for two of the programs in a question and answer format.

The Alberta Wage Subsidy Program (AWSP)

This program's objective is to assist employers to create ADDITIONAL full-time employment opportunities. It is a short-term program allowing for one or more people to hired for a maximum of three-months.

What Type Of Work Is Eligible?

Eligible work generally includes most projects of a business nature. What is NOT eligible includes anything that contributes to the betterment of personal property or residence.

Who Is Eligible As An Employer?

Eligible employers include all full-time farmers plus other private sector employers.

Are There Any Requirements For The Job(s) That I Create?

Each position must be in addition to the employer's regular number of employees and must NOT result in the dismissal, layoff or reduction of the regularly scheduled employees. Each position must provide continuous full-time employment of 32 to 40 hours per week for the duration of the project. Similar positions funded in the last six months are not eligible for funding.

(Cont'd)

Can I As An Employer Just Hire Anyone?

To be eligible an employee must be at least 16 years of age or older and an Alberta resident for at least six months. The employee must be unemployed or working 20 or less hours per week at project start-up. Members of the immediate family of the employer, business partner, corporate officer or shareholder with more than five per cent of capital stock are NOT eligible for employment under this program. Also, the employee must NOT be supervised by an immediate family member. Employess cannot have been employed full time by the employer in the past three months.

What Exactly Is the Funding?

Employers will receive funding for wages on an equal cost-shared basis (50 per cent) up to a maximum government contribution of $2.50 per hour worked. Therefore, to receive the maximum government funding the employer should pay at least $5 per hour. Minimum hours funded will be 32 hours while the maximum funded will be 40 worked hours.

A position will be funded for continuous full-time employment for three months with no possibility of extension.

For all the provincial job creation, the Alberta Government will provide Workers' Compensation coverage for the employee in addition to the specific program(s)'s funding. There is $100,000 maximum that an employer can receive in funding for any one or combination of provincial job creation and training programs. (This includes the Alberta Wage Sudsidy Program, Alberta Youth Employment and Training Program and the Alberta Training Program.)

Can I Hire Right Away?

If an employer wants to hire right away, the employer must telephone BEFORE hiring the individual and then submit an application within 30 days.

For applications or more information contact the Alberta Career Development and Employment at 427-4740 or 422-4740 in Edmonton, call (toll-free) Zenith 22078, call the nearest regional office, or contact Alex Ostapiuk at the farm business management branch in Olds at 556-4235.

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Contact: Alex Ostapiuk
556-4235

The Alberta Business and Community Development (ABCD) Program

The ABCD program has broad objectives that support business and community development. Funding is given to projects that have the greatest potential for job creation after the funding ends. It is a longer-term program requiring a minimum of three people to be hired for projects lasting from six weeks to 12 months.

What Type of Work Is Eligible?

Eligible activities include productivity enhancement such as new construction, expansion or modification of existing facilities and equipment, economic diversification, cultural or recreational development and environmental support activities. Other project ideas certainly will be considered and should be discussed with department staff . Projects resembling ongoing maintenance WILL NOT QUALIFY.

Who Is Eligible As An Employer?

Eligible employers include farmers, businesses, municipalities, improvement districts, counties, non-profit organizations, community recreational associations, and publicly funded organizations.

Are There Any Requirements For the Jobs That I Create?

Under this program, the employer must be prepared to hire a minimum of three full-time people for a time period ranging from a minimum of six weeks to a maximum of 12 months.

Each position must be in addition to the employer's regular number of employees and must NOT result in the dismissal, layoff or reduction of the regularly scheduled employees.

Each position must provide continuous full-time employment of 32 to 40 hours per week for the duration of the project.

Can I As An Employer Just Hire Anyone?

To be eligible, an employee must be at least 16 years of age or older and an Alberta resident for at least six months. The employee must be unemployed or working 20 or less hours per week at project start-up.

(Cont'd)

Members of the immediate family of the employer, business partner, corporate officer or shareholder with more than five per cent of capital stock are NOT eligible for employment under this program. Also, the employee must NOT be supervised by an immediate family member.

The employee must not have been funded within the last three months with the same employer with a provincial and/or federal government employment or training program.

What Exactly Is The Funding?

Private sector project funding will consist of $5 per hour worked per employee from a minimum of 32 worked hours to a maximum of 40 worked hours. For all the provincial job creation, the Alberta Government will provide Worker's Compensation coverage for the employee in addition to the specific program's funding. A private sector employer such as a farmer or businessman must contribute a minimum of 65 per cent to the total cash outlay of that project.

FOR EXAMPLE: The total cost of a NEW fence line construction project would include the cost of the material, equipment rental costs, etc. The requirement is that the farmer cover at least 65 per cent of the project cost. In this example, the total cost of the project is $20,000. Therefore, the farmer must budget for and be able to cover at least $13,000 of the cost of the project before an application for that project will be considered. Keep in mind that the only funding that can be received under this program is $5 per worked hour to a maximum of 40 hours per week per employee.

What Can I Do To Speed Up The Application Process?

Call in before submitting an application to discuss the project idea and the application process.

For applications or more information contact the Alberta Career Development and Employment at 427-4740 or 422-4740 in Edmonton, call (toll-free) Zenith 22078, call the nearest regional office, or contact Alex Ostapiuk at the farm business management branch in Olds at 556-4235.

Contact: Alex Ostapiuk
556-4235

For immediate release

Irrigation branch heads to retire

Two long-time Alberta Agriculture employees who have provided a combined 40 years of service to farmers and the agriculture industry in southern Alberta, will be retiring this summer.

Jay Purnell, who most recently left his position as head of the project planning branch, and Kaljo Pohjakas, who served for many years as head of the land classification branch in Lethbridge, are now both overseeing special projects on behalf of the division director until their retirement in early June.

They will be honored at a retirement party in Lethbridge May 6.

Purnell began his career as a design engineer with the city of Calgary in 1959. He later taught school for a couple years and worked for the British Columbia Water Resources Branch for four years before returning to Alberta to assume a position as a river basin planning engineer with Alberta Environment.

In 1972 he became the first director of Alberta Agriculture's newly formed irrigation division in Lethbridge.

His efforts over the years helped the irrigation industry in Alberta grow from 700,0000 acres in the early 1970s to 1.2 million acres today.

He was also responsible for development of the ditchrider training course, the irrigation manager/board member annual seminar, and launched the weekly southern Alberta television program, "Irrigation Country" which later became known as "Agri Vision", and the publication, the "Water Hauler's Bulletin".

As part of his career, Purnell was also a member of the Association of Professional Engineers and the Canadian Water Resources Association.

Pohjakas, was involved for more than 20 years with the utilization and management of soil and water resources.

Before joining Alberta Agriculture, he worked with Agriculture Canada for 12 years and spent eight years oversees working with the United Nations and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in Iran, Malaysia, and East Indonesia.

(Cont'd)

Irrigation branch heads to retire (Cont'd)

He joined Alberta Agriculture in 1976 as a soil and water specialist conducting applied irrigation research. As head of the department's land classification branch since 1981, Pohjakas has been responsible for water rights, rehabilitation and irrigation project improvement.

He was also instrumental in spearheading the first Land Classification Standards Manual for use in Alberta.

Along with his career he was a charter member of the Canadian Society of Agricultural Engineers, a member of the Institute of Agrology and a member of the Canadian Society of Soil Science.

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Contact: Jay Purnell - 381-5170
Kaljo Pohjakas - 381-5121

For immediate release

Fall calving may be a cattleman's option

Calves born in late summer and raised with proper management can be bigger, healthier, and worth more money than their spring counterparts, says an Alberta Agriculture livestock specialist.

While it many not be a system that works for everyone, fall calving could be an alternative for Alberta cattlemen, says Ross Gould, head of the department's animal management section.

Gould, speaking at a recent Alberta Agriculture conference, said studies show that calves born between August and October and sold in the spring could be worth between $36 and $57 more to the farmer than a comparable size calf born in the spring and sold in the fall.

The specialist says while money is a factor, one of the overriding benefits of fall calving is easier management.

Gould said there are also fewer calf losses in fall calving, the cows are generally in better condition, the weather usually isn't a problem, calves are easier to wean, cows usually breed back earlier and with a higher conception rate, and cull cows sold after pregnancy testing in the spring are usually worth more money.

"Fall calving may not be for everyone, but it is an option to be considered," he said. "Many beef producers who are using the system are pleased with the results. Their records show that, while their costs are slightly higher, the advantages for marketing the calves, feeders and cull cows will at least make up for the extra costs. Each producer will need to decide whether these advantages or disadvantages are more important in their own herd situation."

In a report to the department's Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit Conference, Gould said the four most common reasons to get involved in fall calving include: 1. the desire to avoid calf scours by calving on pasture in more favorable weather; 2. improving the marketing options for the weaned calves into the "grass market" for March and April; 3. the possibility of better conception rates from fall matings; 4. providing a second opportunity for cows or heifers culled in a limited breeding season.

(Cont'd)

Gould told the conference that nutrition of cows and calves is still one of the most important factors in successfully managing the system.

He said however, by calving in late summer the cows are usually in good condition. The pregnant dry cows will do fairly well on native or rough pasture and don't need to be moved to better quality grass until the calving season.

Good nutrition must be maintained through the winter feeding period, although the young calves can be provided with creep feed easing the cow's demand for food. The type of feeding program required by the calves after weaning depends on whether they will be sold or kept for the "grasser" market.

Referring to cow fertility, Gould said there is some evidence cows which calve between May and November begin cycling earlier than those calving in December through April.

Health wise, studies show that late summer calving herds have less calving difficulty and much less calf scours or pneumonia than those calving in the spring.

In marketing, calves sold in March and April usually bring a premium of three to five per cent over fall calves. As well, culls cows sold in the spring are worth about 25 per cent more from March to May than in October to December.

Gould said production costs per cow in a late summer calving herd is about $30 more than the average spring calving herd.

He said there are three options to getting started with a fall calving herd. One is to delay breeding of the herd for six or seven months. Another strategy is to delay breeding of replacement heifers and late-calving cows and phase into it. While a third option is to maintain both spring and fall calving herds.

The branch head says disadvantages to a fall calving herd could include, potential cash flow problems as the herd is converted to late summer calving; more attention to management during winter feeding and breeding; a need for higher quality fall and winter feed supplies; higher winter feeding costs; and calving season conflicts with grain and silage harvest.

Contact: Ross Gould
427-5335

For immediate release

Technology needs to be buffered with common sense

Farmers need to develop a more conservative attitude and be careful in the use of new technology says an agriculture economist from Nebraska.

Marty Strange, speaking to a recent Alberta Agriculture conference, says adopting all kinds of new technology often just leads to economic and environmental disasters.

Strange said producers using their heads, and taking a series of small steps to reduce production costs could be dollars ahead in the future. He says new technology that helps reduce input costs, as opposed to that which leads to increased production, is probably better for the industry.

Strange, co-director of the Centre for Rural Affairs in Walt Hill, Nebraska told producers attending the Managing Agriculture Technology for Profit Conference, that his home state was a good example of how things can go wrong.

He said a push a few years ago to greatly expand crop production under irrigation has lead to an environmental and economic disaster which is costing the government millions of dollars to correct.

With a large acquifer under a good portion of the state, suitable soil and inexpensive land, a program was launched to expand irrigated crop production. Irrigation in the state grew from about 2,500 pivots to more than 25,000 pivots in just a few years.

"But the land was treated poorly and there was a serious erosion problem," he told the conference. "As well with all this increased use of water, the water table was drawn down which created conflicts for nearby grass farmers who relied on that sub-surface irrigation to produce pasture for their livestock."

With a large investment in irrigation, farmers were forced to increase corn production to pay for it. The end result was surplus production, reduced prices and farm failures.

(Cont'd)

Technology needs to be buffered by common sense (cont'd)

To restore the land and stabilize the industry the U.S. government is funding the conservation reserve program which is paying Nebraska farmers about $52 an acre annually not to produce a crop on land that was originally only worth $50 an acre.

"We must be selective in the technology we use and ask what is the benefit before we move too quickly," he said. "Diversification is good, and it must be tempered with common sense. We have to be more responsible for our actions - get back to the basics and old fashion virtues."

He said conservation is becoming a more important aspect in U.S. farm land management. By 1995 U.S. farmers will need to have developed and filed a soil conservation plan for their farm which will be needed if they are to qualify for any government benefits.

Strange said the theory that efficiency means full production is wrong. In the future, efficiency will be based on good resource management, use of conservation farming practices and getting maximum returns from reduced input costs.

The economist used another example from his state to describe the value of conservation efforts.

He said a study in the late 1970s with a group of small family farm operations was launched to see if they could reduce energy consumption through basic management changes.

The results after three years showed the farmers were using 13 per cent less energy and spending 17 per cent less on their energy costs. He said two-thirds of the energy saved was based on behavior or attitude changes such as turning off the lights when they weren't needed and not letting the tractor idle for long periods.

Strange said this study is just an example that a commitment to conservation measures does pay.

(Cont'd)

Technology needs to be buffered by common sense (cont'd)

"We need to look beyond technology and realize there are always more choices on how to get any particular job done," he said. "Technology is good, but we need to use common sense as well. A good example is the bovine growth hormone which is supposed to help dairymen produce more milk. But the last thing we need in this country is to produce more milk. What would be more useful is to develop technology which would allow us to produce the same amount of milk with less hay. That way we could reduce input costs and really save money."

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Contact: Marty Strange
(402) 846-5428

April 15, 1988
For immediate release

Potato marketing board to go ahead

The Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council has announced that potato producers have voted in favor of the establishment of a potato marketing board for Alberta.

More than 100 potato farmers, representing in excess of 21,000 acres in production, registered to vote in a plebiscite held to decide the fate of the proposed Alberta Potato Marketing Board. Of the 107 votes cast, 59 were marked in favor of the board.

Marketing Council General Manager Ken Smith stated, "This plebiscite has determined that the majority of concerned potato farmers wish to see a marketing board established for their industry. We expect to have the marketing board set up within the next six months."

The primary responsibility of the Alberta Potato Marketing Board will be to set and regulate the minimum prices paid to producers for seed and table potatoes produced and sold in Alberta. In addition, the board will assume all responsibilities and powers currently held by the Alberta Potato Commission. These will include the delivery of market development programs, research projects and field services, and the administration of the Advance Payment of Crops Act. The board will not be empowered to restrict potato production, nor to set prices for potatoes sold to processors.

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Contact: Ken Smith
General Manager
Alberta Agricultural
Products Marketing Council
Edmonton

Phone: (403) 427-2164

For immediate release

Weather could have impact on milk production costs

An Alberta Agriculture market analyst, in his quarterly report, says fluid milk prices aren't expected to increase before the dairy year ends July 31, although the situation could change if the weather stays dry.

Under the milk pricing formula changes in production input costs can trigger changes in the prices paid to producers.

"Weather conditions over the next weeks could be important to milk price prospects in the coming months," says Al Dooley in the dairy situation and outlook report.

"A continuation of the dry conditions experienced over the winter will seriously affect growth of the spring pasture. Increases in hay prices in particular cannot be ruled out, with implications for both net returns and fluid milk prices."

In his second-quarter report, Dooley notes that commercial sales of milk continue their long-established trend away from whole milk to lower fat milk. Homogenized milk sales in Canada in the first half of the 1987-88 dairy year are down 13 per cent compared to 1985 sales.

Nationally there was an increase in milk available for industrial uses in the first half of the dairy year compared to a year earlier. The increase, says Dooley, is partly the result of a reduction in levy rates charged on production up to 102 per cent of market share quota (MSQ).

In February, national MSQ for industrial milk was increased 1.5 per cent, reflecting increased domestic consumption of dairy products. This increase, as well as lower levies and an increase in the target price for industrial milk, are good news for the industry, says the specialist.

World market conditions are also improved as seen through price strengthening for both skim and whole milk powders.

For more information or a complete copy of the Dairy Situation and Outlook contact Al Dooley at 427-5382 in Edmonton.

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Contact: Al Dooley
427-5382

Agri-News Briefs

SIX ALBERTA 4-H DELEGATES BACK FROM OTTAWA

Six Alberta 4-H members from across the province are back home after a week long seminar in Ottawa that reinforced their committment to citizenship. Janice Woody of Coronation, Julie Swanson of Milk River, Catherine McGrath of Vermilion, Mark Fisher of Rosalind, James Schwindt of Spruce Grove and Dallas Mueller of Lacombe were joined by 4-H members from across Canada at the National 4-H Citizenship Seminar, April 8 to 14. Accompanied by 4-H specialist Penny Wilkes, the six were given a send-off banquet sponsored by the Alberta Wheat Pool. During their week in the nation's capital, they visited Parliament Hill, listened through question period and had lunch with their members of parliament. They also visited Rideau Hall and the Supreme Court of Canada. Wilkes says the citizenship theme was reinforced by several speakers at the seminar. As a finale the 4-H delegates, attended a citizenship court in Ottawa where, in a symbollic gesture, they were all presented with their Canadian citizenship papers. The six Alberta delegates were chosen last year to participate in the seminar at the annual 4-H Selections Program.

GRASSHOPPER FORECAST IMPROVED

For the fourth consecutive year, Agriculture Canada is forecasting a decline in grasshopper numbers in Alberta. In a recent release Dr. D.L. Johnson, an insect ecologist with the research station in Lethbridge, says about six per cent of the province is expected to have severe to very severe infestations, eight per cent will have moderate infestations and 84 per cent with have light to very light infestations. "The forecast for 1988 indicates low to moderate infestations except in southwestern counties," says Johnson. "Some small areas near Fort Macleod and in Cardston county still have severe infestations. The total area expected to require management action has decreased by at least half. For details on the grasshopper situation contact Johnson in Lethbridge 327-4561.

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Agri-News Briefs (cont'd)

DEVEREUX CHAIRS PORK PRODUCERS BOARD

For Saskatchewan pork producer Bill Devereux has been elected chairman of the Albert Pork Producers Marketing Board. The district six director has been a board member for one year and has served as a delegate on two occasions. He replaces retiring board chairman, Roy Barrett of Ponoka. The new vice-chairman is Ralph Erb of Seven Persons. Erb has been a district one director for one year. At the board's recent annual meeting Devereux was re-elected as district six director by acclamation. Three new directors elected included Allen Toles of Acme for district two, Jim Smith of Innisfail for district four, and Jerry Devries of Neerlandia for district eight.

RANGE TOUR IN SOUTHERN ALBERTA

The Alberta Chapter of the Society for Range Management will be holding its annual summer tour, July 21 to 23 in southern Alberta. The event will be headquartered at a campsite on the Bar K2 Ranch (Deseret Ranches Ltd.) south of Spring Coulee, on the west end of the Milk River Ridge. The program includes a range walk, a discussion of local ranching history, a day with local range managers and other special events. For more information contact Bob Wroe in Lacombe at 782-4641.

TOP SPEAKERS PICKED IN VERMILION REGION

Four members of 4-H clubs in the Alberta Agriculture's northeast region, headquartered in Vermilion, have been named the top public speakers in the region. At a recent speakoff held in St. Jeromes School in Vermilion, winners were picked in junior and senior categories. Kyla Makowecki, of the St. Paul 4-H Multi Club was first place winner in the junior division, while Craig Convey, of Preston 4-H Beef Club was second. In the senior category, Lori Stewart, of the Vermilion 4-H Light Horse Club was first and Lisa Turgeon, of Lac La Biche 4-H Multi Club was second.

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PRINCE RUPERT EXPECTS HIGH EXPORTS

Prince Rupert Grain Terinmals expects to continue its high wheat exports this year according to a recent company release. Grain exports in 1987 increased 156 per cent to 4.8 million tonnes from 1.89 million tonnes in 1986. Similar throughput levels are expected in 1988. The terminal set a new annual tonnage record last year of 13.4 million tonnes up 24 per cent over 1986. Substantial increases in grain and lumber exports led the way in the volume of commodities handled. The $275 million terminal is operated by Prince Rupert Grain Ltd., a consortium of: Alberta Wheat Pool, James Richardson & Sons Ltd. (Pioneer Grain), Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, Cargill Ltd., United Grain Growers Ltd. and Manitoba Pool Elevators. The Alberta government, through the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, contributed $220 million toward grain terminal construction.

REDA OFFERS ANNUAL YOUTH PROGRAMS

Alberta teenagers looking for a break from routine this summer who are interested in spending a week in a mountain setting, should sign up for the Rural Education and Development Association (REDA) youth programs. The 27th annual Co-operative Youth Programs will be held again at the Goldeye Centre 10 kilometres west of Nordegg on the David Thompson Highway. Youths between 13 and 19 can participate in the one-week programs offered during July and August. The three age levels of seminars offered help develop leadership skills, community living skills, and life skills as well as inform participants about co-operatives and agriculture's importance in Alberta. For more information on the programs contact REDA in Edmonton at 451-5959.

TOP SWINE SOLD AT LLOYDMINISTER SALE

Several Alberta producers had the top price animals at the first Lloydminster Swine Sale held recently. The 14 bred gilts averaged $415, while seven open gilts average $251, and 11 boars averaged $385 each. Daniel Turko of Newsbrook, Alberta bought the top bred Landrace gilt from Emerald Stock Farms of Balcarres, Saskatchewan for $825. D and G Maschmeyer of Bruderheim had the top selling Yorkshire boar that went to Terry Charchun of Dewberry, Alberta for $500. Volume buyers were Ford Bros. of Irma, Alberta, selecting six bred gilts and Terry Moore who bought five head. A fall sale is planned in November.

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